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# The Invention of “Folk Music” and “Art Music”

Emerging Categories  
from Ossian to Wagner

**MATTHEW GELBART**

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## The Invention of “Folk Music” and “Art Music”

We tend to take for granted the labels we put to different forms of music. This study considers the origins and implications of the way in which we categorize music today. Whereas earlier ways of classifying music were based on its different functions, for the past two hundred years we have been obsessed with creativity and musical origins, and classify music along these lines. Matthew Gelbart argues that folk music and art music became meaningful concepts only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and only in relation to each other. He examines how cultural nationalists motivated the earliest classification of music by origins, and how the notions of folk music and art music followed – in conjunction with changing conceptions of nature, and changing ideas about human creativity. Through tracing the history of these musical categories, the book confronts our assumptions about different kinds of music today.

MATTHEW GELBART teaches in the Music Department at Boston College, Massachusetts. His work has been published in the *Journal of the Royal Music Association*. This is his first book.

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*Emerging Categories from Ossian  
to Wagner*

MATTHEW GELBART

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# Introduction

Americans of recent generations will remember a game on the children's television show *Sesame Street* called "One of these things is not like the others," which teaches young children to balance similarities and differences by establishing categories. Most people today would have no problem playing that game with these three tunes:

- (1) the Scottish fiddle dance tune "John Anderson My Jo," probably derived from a bawdy song;
- (2) "MacLeod's Rowing," a *Piobaireachd* ("pibroch") for Highland bagpipe;
- (3) Jean-Baptiste Lully's air "Sommes-nous pas trop heureux" from the ballet *L'Impatience* (1661).

The last here certainly seems the odd one out. It is French and the other two are Scottish. More importantly, by today's usual reckoning standards, it is "classical": part of a well-funded world of urban, sophisticated music-making – and part of a literate tradition in which authorship is clearly established, and pieces are communicated as fixed texts reflecting that author's apparent intentions. The other two tunes, meanwhile, are apparently varieties of "folk" or "traditional" music: part of a communal tradition, usually disseminated anonymously through oral communication, and thus undergoing constant minor variations and additions.

Facile categorizations such as those encouraged by the *Sesame Street* game are always problematic on closer view of course, and "folk" and "classical" are among the most problematic of all. For example, one could easily argue, as many writers now do, that the pibroch is a form of classical music. Unlike the lighter forms of piped Highland music, pibrochs are long, carefully laid-out, ceremonial pieces in an elaborate variation form, with each of the increasingly complex sections having a specific name and placement. Authorship claims have quite often been staked as well – the piece in the list above is reputedly by Donald Mór

MacCrimmon.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, though pibrochs have been passed down orally, for centuries they were spread only among the professional piping elite, through an oral mnemonic system called *Canntaireachd* (in which syllables represent notes and ornaments) that was a closely guarded tradition among this elite. Most Highland pipers in the eighteenth century – including Donald Mór MacCrimmon – were trained musicians under the direct patronage of Highland clan chiefs. Thus, despite the fact that the Highland pipe is often considered an emblematic “folk” instrument,<sup>2</sup> it is easy to contend that there are both folk and art genres for the instrument. Such considerations would create a second possible scenario for answering which piece “does not belong” in my list: the fiddle dance (no. 1) would stand out as the only real “folk” tune.

But these little problems with sorting the list are really only symptoms of a much larger mess: defining folk and art music in the first place. Most attempts so far have treated the terms as categories that can be applied objectively from outside. Consider the “official” definition of folk music laid out in 1954 by the International Folk Music Council (henceforth IFMC). I quote it in full because I will refer back to it later:

Folk music is the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission. The factors that shape the tradition are: (i) continuity which links the present with the past; (ii) variation which springs from the creative impulse of the individual or the group; and (iii) selection by the community, which determines the form or forms in which the music survives ... The term can be applied to music that has been evolved from rudimentary beginnings by a community uninfluenced by popular and art music and it can likewise be applied to music which has originated with an individual composer and has subsequently been absorbed into the unwritten living tradition of a community ... The term does not cover composed popular music that has been taken over ready-made by a community and remains unchanged, for it is the re-fashioning and re-creation of the music by the community that gives it its folk character.<sup>3</sup>

Because this characterization attempted to consolidate working definitions used by many different collectors and scholars over several

<sup>1</sup> See William Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society 1750–1950: Transmission, Change, and the Concept of Tradition* (East Linton, East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 405–6, for a consideration of the attribution of this piece.

<sup>2</sup> This itself is a bit ironic, since the other bagpipes that were common in Scotland (the Lowland or Border pipes, and the Northumbrian or small pipes) were actually played by less well-trained musicians, and were used for less specialized repertoires (though they probably shared much of their lighter repertoire with the Highland pipe). In any case, these instruments have since the nineteenth century been largely eclipsed in the public imagination by the Highland pipe as representing Scottish tradition.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 7 (1955), 23. This definition was often invoked and cited; see for example Maud Karpeles’s Preface in Cecil Sharp, *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions*, 4th rev. edn (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1965), xvi–xvii.



generations, some of its criteria were under debate at the time; and certainly every fixed definition of folk music has been controversial ever since. Eventually, the issue became thorny enough that in 1980–1 a series of deliberations within the executive board of the IFMC itself resulted in the organization rechristening itself as the International Council for Traditional Music.<sup>4</sup> While this change reflected a trend toward the diversification of scholarly methods and of the objects of study (a trend brought about by the increasing interaction of folk-musical study with ethnomusicology ever since that discipline emerged clearly at mid-century),<sup>5</sup> the implicit assumption lingered that folk music, even under alternative names such as “traditional music,” was an objective and meaningful category. As a result, the meat of the IFMC definition soldiered onward, often in unspoken form, and so did the attendant debates and problems.

While folk music scholars were struggling to define their domain, “art music” (or “classical music”) had come to represent a canonized and canonic body. Probably for this reason, there was no official definition along the line of the IFMC’s folk music definition. When threatened, musicians and critics have defended their “artistic” ground, but the onus of defining classical music has instead tended to fall on the champions of other musics: on would-be revisers of educational curricula, or on dispossessed outsiders to the classical community. Today “serious music” is less and less an acceptable synonym for classical music, but with the (nominal) passing of such culturally hegemonic complacency, defining classical music has only become more openly pressing. As anyone has found who has ever taught a survey course on “Western Art Music” and tried to justify why the curriculum covers what it does – and excludes what it does – it is virtually impossible to define such a domain in isolation. Perhaps the best way to group this music is to say that it is a body of music based primarily on literate dissemination;<sup>6</sup> but then many new pieces that are considered classical are not so – avant-garde electronic music communicated primarily in recorded form, for example. (Or else,

<sup>4</sup> See Philip V. Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), xii–xv; also *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 14 (1982), Editor’s Preface; and Erich Stockmann, “International Folk Music Council / International Council for Traditional Music – Forty Years,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 20 (1988), 1–10, esp. 8.

<sup>5</sup> The older name for the organizations seemed to encourage only the study of music among rural groups within Western societies, and to discourage the study of musics from classless, unindustrialized cultures. For some brief comments on the coexistence and cross-influence between the International Folk Music Council (IFMC) and the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) after the latter was founded in the early 1950s, see Bruno Nettl, “The IFMC/ICTM and the Development of Folk Music in the United States,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 20 (1988), 19–25, esp. 23–4.

<sup>6</sup> This is the working definition used by Richard Taruskin in his massive *Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1: xxii–xxiii.

if recordings count as extensions of written tradition, then much rock music would have to be grouped as classical, since most of it is disseminated in recorded form.) Furthermore, a definition based only on literate dissemination downplays the myriad other connotations that have been attached to “classical music.” Yet, other criteria are more problematic still: if clear authorship and a relatively unchanging form (melodic or otherwise) were the defining elements of “art” music, then “Happy Birthday to You” would have to be considered in this category – its authors’ estates have sued over unauthorized public use.<sup>7</sup> Trying to make a certain level of “complexity” the defining element seems downright wrong-headed – wrong-headed because such arguments have historically been the most culturally loaded, yet they still fail to withstand scrutiny.<sup>8</sup> If complexity were the defining criterion, then where should minimalist music be placed, or Gregorian chant, or even a Puccini aria, not to mention the many kinds of jazz and rock and other musics that are extremely “complex” (whatever that term means)?

Patent, “objective” definitions of both folk and art music, whether by the IFMC, textbook authors, or anyone else, are doomed to inconsistency, tautology, and ultimately self-contradiction because folk music and art music are not timeless, objective truths, but very human constructions. Reminders from linguists and philosophers of language that signifiers gain their meaning from use and contrast take on crucial weight here. Especially relevant is Wittgenstein’s insistence that most terms encompass not single distillable essences but interlinked “family resemblances.”<sup>9</sup> If, as Wittgenstein implies, definitions of almost *any* terms are complicated by this phenomenon, surely abstractions such as “folk music” and “art music” must be among the hardest to approach. However, we should not give up all attempts at pinning down the terms, as temptation may beckon.<sup>10</sup> The stakes are highest with the very

<sup>7</sup> For a thumbnail history of this song and its use, see James J. Fuld, *The Book of World-Famous Music: Classical, Popular and Folk*, 5th edn (New York: Dover Publications, 2000), 266–8; and note the three-way categorization in the title of the book itself.

<sup>8</sup> In defining its scope, even the most recent edition of the college textbook *Listening to Music*, by Craig Wright, 4th edn (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Schirmer, 2004) seems to hinge on this factor, and lumps all other music (rock, folk, etc.) under the term “popular.” Wright stakes his claim: “But popular music, unlike classical, rarely contains multiple levels of musical activity, and for this reason does not require, and does not reward, concentrated thought” (4).

<sup>9</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, bilingual edn with English trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), esp. sections 66–7 (pp. 31–2).

<sup>10</sup> This path is tempting precisely because it seems to avoid the errors and value-judgements implied by conventional definitions, but it creates more questions than it answers. Thus, for example, recent editions of another introductory college music textbook, *Listen*, basically resort to defining “classical” music tautologically as music that is considered “classical.” (Joseph Kerman and Gary Tomlinson, *Listen*, brief 5th edn [Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004], xii–xiii.) On the folk side, a similar example is Bohlman’s otherwise meticulous *Study of Folk Music in the Modern*

terms that are often hardest to define, because aesthetic categories are inherently socio-political instruments.

In cases such as the categories of folk and art musics, it is the histories of the concepts – the nebulous masses of connotations that build around them – that give them meaning. Charting this process is an act of historical “defining” that uncovers the deeper assumptions and prejudices that the terms have picked up. (This includes considering past definitions that have been offered as well.) To some extent, scholars have already set about tracing the historical paths of the concepts “folk music” and “art music.” Some have sought to document, others to reform. In Germany, there is a hundred-year-old established scholarly discourse examining the term “Volkslied,” which was coined by Johann Gottfried Herder long before “folk song” entered the English language. Much of the German debate has hinged on the question of whether Herder created the concept itself, or just the name.<sup>11</sup> In the last few decades, some scholars, especially British Marxists, have gone further than historicizing the notion of folk song, by attacking it outright as ideologically dangerous. Dave Harker’s *Fakesong* is the most extended, trenchant, and provocative study along these lines – although, like most of the German studies, it considers song texts largely to the exclusion of music.<sup>12</sup> Harker shows how most of the material presented under the label “folk song” since the eighteenth century has been manipulated and bowdlerized by bourgeois intellectuals to conform to their ideas of “the folk,” and to serve their own ends. Following lines similar to Harker’s, other writers have sought to replace the term “folk” (and thus “folk song” and “folk music”) completely.<sup>13</sup>

*World*, which deliberately and explicitly avoids defining “folk music”; Bohlman leaves it up to his readers’ historical sense of the term to determine what he means by the world in different contexts (*The Study of Folk Music*, xviii).

<sup>11</sup> The most important contributions on the subject have been: Erwin Kircher, “Volkslied und Volkspoesie in der Sturm- und Drangzeit: Ein begriffsgeschichtlicher Versuch,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung* 4 (1903), 1–57; John Meier, *Kunstlied und Volkslied in Deutschland* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1906); Paul Levy, *Geschichte des Begriffes Volkslied*, *Acta Germanica: Organ für deutsche Philologie* 7, no. 3 (Berlin: Meyer and Muller, 1911); Julian von Pulikowski, *Geschichte des Begriffes Volkslied im musikalischen Schrifttum: ein Stück deutscher Geistesgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsbuchshandlung, 1933); Ernst Klusen, “Das Gruppenlied als Gegenstand,” *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* 12 (1967), 21–42; Klusen, *Volkslied: Fund und Erfindung* (Cologne: Hans Gerig, 1969); Walter Wiora, “Das Alter des Begriffes Volkslied,” *Musikforschung* 23 (1970), 420–8 (trans. as “Reflections on the Problem: How Old is the Concept Folksong?” *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 3 [1971], 22–33).

<sup>12</sup> Dave Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British “Folksong,” 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> See for example Charles Keil, “Who Needs ‘The Folk’?” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 15 (1978), 263–5; and Michael Pickering and Tony Green, “Towards a Cartography of the Vernacular Milieu,” in *Everyday Culture: Popular Song and the Vernacular Milieu*, ed. Pickering and Green (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1987). A good review of the literature on this subject is given by James Porter in

But neither "folk" nor "classical" have really been replaced as labels. Certainly the layperson has no qualms about using these categories when walking into a music store (as Anne Dhu McLucas has pointed out in a recent reconsideration of the definition of "folk song"),<sup>14</sup> and even in scholarship the terms persist, either openly or under the surface. (Substituting the word "traditional" for "folk," even in official group names such as the IFMC/ICTM, has often implied no deeper rethinking.) Entire social groups have formed around these labels, and it is only because the terms are so well established that they can be put through new contortions and still apparently retain a meaningful essence. As one example, during the 1950s and 1960s, "folk music" was appropriated by "counter-cultural" elements of society as a political tool, and – despite initial resistance from some factions of the "folk revival" movements at the time – many topical songs written by performers such as Bob Dylan, Ewan MacColl, Phil Ochs or Buffy Sainte-Marie were drawn under the folk umbrella. (Even some forms of rock have made a bid to construe themselves as "folk," based on their communal and "authentic" associations.<sup>15</sup>) These changes, of course, have only broadened the connotations of the term folk music,<sup>16</sup> yet both performers and listeners these days remain acutely aware of whether they are participating in "folk"/"traditional" music or "classical"/"art" music (or a third category, "popular" music). When they straddle the lines they do so self-consciously. Folk music and art music, being recent constructions that have portrayed themselves as timeless categories, share much with the idea of "invented traditions."<sup>17</sup> Forged to

"Convergence, Divergence, and Dialectic in Folksong Paradigms: Critical Directions for Transatlantic Scholarship," *Journal of American Folklore* 106 (1993), 61–98. There is also a brief consideration in Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music*, xvi, xix.

<sup>14</sup> See Anne Dhu McLucas, "The Multi-Layered Concept of 'Folk Song' in American Music: The Case of Jean Ritchie's 'The Two Sisters,'" in *Themes and Variations: Writings in Honor of Rulan Chao Pian*, ed. Bell Yung and Joseph S. C. Lam (Harvard University Music Department and The Institute of Chinese Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1994), 212–30.

<sup>15</sup> On this, see Simon Frith, "'The Magic that Can Set You Free': The Ideology of Folk and the Myth of the Rock Community," *Popular Music* 1 (1981), 159–68.

<sup>16</sup> They also complicate an argument such as Harker's, since the acceptance of these protest songs as "folk" reverses some of the power-relations he sees in the term. (Though Harker considers the mid-twentieth-century folk song revival in his last chapter, on A. L. Lloyd, he approaches it primarily from the angle of scholars in the movement rather than from the perspective of audiences and performers. Lloyd himself did perform, but his extensive scholarship made him somewhat atypical, and he rejected the broadening of the "folk" category to include the likes of Bob Dylan.) For a collection of different viewpoints on the folk revival (primarily in the US), see Neil V. Rosenberg, ed., *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1–14.

fulfill specific social purposes when they were new, they also have the power to adapt. Indeed, these terms must still be necessary in the contemporary world, or they would not have such lasting power.<sup>18</sup> To understand fully the persistence and influence of these categories, we must not only recognize the fact that each is open to variations bearing loose “family resemblances,” we must also realize something that has not been considered much in the existing literature: the specific historical interdependence of “folk” and “art” as a binary, dialectical pairing.<sup>19</sup> These signifiers have gained their referents through contrast and opposition to each other: throughout their history, the fact that “folk music” and “art music” have functioned in dialogue with each other has rendered their force exclusive rather than inclusive. Thus, for example, each criterion listed above as a potential defining feature of art music fails because it begins as an attempt to exclude specific kinds of music from the definition, and then cannot manage to keep out another specimen or kind of music that also does not “belong.” We end up with a group of definitions of what art music *isn't*, not a single definition of what it is. A look at the problematic IFMC definition of folk music cited at length above shows that it works the same way: the boundaries of folk music are determined tautologically by opposition to art music (and here popular music as well).

Since folk music and art music came to exist only in relation to each other, the present study undertakes to “define” these labels by examining the history of their mutual dependence. The reader will notice that as I deconstruct the binary opposition between folk music and art music, I am drawn into using several other binaries (local/universal, oral/literate, music/words, function/origin). Some of these will also be interrogated in the course of my study, but each needs to be treated differently, since not all binary oppositions are created equal. Some are embedded in three-way relationships (as both folk and art would come to stand in opposition to “popular”). Some map more or less problematically onto other sets of oppositions. A few appear clear opposites; others shade into each other or even imply a conflation of otherwise incongruous levels. Overall, I have tried to avoid looking at such dichotomies from any single dogmatic angle, since both structuralist and deconstructionist approaches often obscure the differences between types of dialectical opposition, not to mention between specific oppositions. Some binary pairs have been used (and abused) in ways

<sup>18</sup> Thus McLucas, for example, rejects disposing of the term “folk song,” stressing instead the need to clarify and refine which aspects of the “multi-layered” concept are implied in each use of the moniker (“Concept of Folk Song,” 229).

<sup>19</sup> This aspect of the concepts, though mentioned (including by those who would do away with the term “folk” – see for example Keil, “Who Needs ‘The Folk?’” 263), has not been explored in detail.

worth illustrating, even if others may be necessary as we try to interpret history to make this very point. In turning to history, it also becomes apparent how both sides of a dialectical pair are so often based on the same cultural movements and assumptions. This last is certainly true of folk music and art music. Instead of tracing only the individual paths of these two categories, the common set of ideas that nourished both and led to their differentiation must also be examined.

Perhaps the most striking observation that comes from looking at "art music" and "folk music" together, as two sides of a new way of thinking about music, is that both ideas depend on investigation of creative sources. That is, the categories are separated based primarily on criteria involving musical origins: where a piece was written, in what context, and by what person, or what kind of person(s). To claim that original creative sources are essential criteria in defining art music is perhaps not contentious, since we tend to think immediately about composers when we think of this category. About folk music, the proposition might seem more tenuous. The apparent focus on modes of transmission and social interaction in many accounts of folk music, however, betrays only superficial concern with the uses of the music as a defining element of folk music itself. In definitions, attention to use has tended ultimately to devolve upon questions of creation and origin; it is just that creative "origin" picks up a wider meaning, stressing a gradual, collective ontogeny – a process rather than a moment. The IFMC definition is the *locus classicus* of this thinking, setting folk music apart from art and popular musics because of its continual "re-fashioning and re-creation . . . by the community." What really defines folk music here is the process of creation.<sup>20</sup> Granted, in the last twenty-five years ethnomusicological approaches to folk music have resulted in a more genuine turn toward examining how this music is *used* by groups of people. Still, to a large extent these newer approaches need to take on *a priori* definitions of "folk music," for such definitions are necessary to dictate what falls within or without the scope of study in the first place.<sup>21</sup> The social groups that have

<sup>20</sup> Even apparently divergent theories such as those of Phillips Barry, who claimed that "any definition [of folk song] by origin is beside the point" ("William Carter, the Bensontown Homer," *Journal of American Folklore* 23 [1912], 159, n. 2, italics original), ultimately embraced the idea that what defined folk song was its "communal recreation" in transmission (*ibid.*, 165, 168), regardless of the individual origins of different items. This, of course, ends up dwelling on the questions of creative origins in the same way as does the IFMC definition (and the working definitions used by Cecil Sharp and other notable collectors). So it is not surprising that Philip Bohlman opens his book on *The Study of Folk Music* with a chapter on origins, noting that "the need to relate folk music to its beginnings persists as an essential and pervasive component of folk music theory" (2).

<sup>21</sup> This problem was isolated by Georgina Boyes ("New Directions – Old Destinations: A Consideration of the Role of the Tradition-Bearer in Folksong Research," in *Singer, Song and Scholar*, ed. Ian Russell [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986], 9–17).



formed around labels such as folk and classical have relied on similar tacit understandings of the categories – understandings which formed gradually through definitions that were based on creative origins.<sup>22</sup> The origin-based categories from the nineteenth century seem to continue lingering at the root of our musical divisions.

On the other hand, as I will argue, musical categories were based until the early eighteenth century almost exclusively on the functions of music, so the folk and art categories would have been quite foreign ideas at that time. I thus begin my investigation at the crucial juncture of the eighteenth century when there was an increasing emphasis on music's origins (for reasons detailed in Chapter 1), laying the groundwork for new, origin-based categories to form. By a long century later – in the mid-1800s – folk music and art music had acquired connotations more or less consistent with their present meanings. Additionally, by the mid-nineteenth century, the third category, popular music, had begun to establish itself – multiplying the possible combinations of binary and ternary oppositions through which both folk and art could henceforth

Boyes argues that although nowadays “the focus of folksong research has shifted from the item of tradition to performers and their performance” (11), “It seems that the concept of tradition applied by researchers is still circumscribed by the idea of the traditional item. Having established tradition bearers as being those individuals who know a body of items classified as traditional, most fieldworkers then take a circular path to the point that defines as suitable for traditional song research those items which are known by the individuals they classify as tradition bearers” (16). Boyes has reiterated these claims more recently (in *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* [Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993], 16–17). Indeed, such assumptions do seem to continue; it is hard to study “folk music” as a practice without assuming that it also has a circumscribed domain of texts. As recent examples, see Niall MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1994); Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music*; Anthony McCann, “All That Is Not Given Is Lost: Irish Traditional Music, Copyright, and Common Property,” *Ethnomusicology* 45 (2001), 89–106.

<sup>22</sup> In a field project I did on the “San Francisco Scottish Fiddlers” in 1997, I found that the members perceived clear differences between their world and the “classical” world. The main elements binding the group together were social: they found the folk community “creatively and organizationally unhierarchical,” and welcomed its accepting, warm, accessible, nurturing atmosphere. Many of them had been put off by the rigidity, competition, and unimaginativeness they had experienced in their past “classical” training. Nevertheless, despite the fact that they tend to view the “folk” experience socially, they still need to define the repertoire boundaries of the “folk” music that binds them together; and this is tacitly done through questions of origin. (The process can sometimes be indirect as well: for my informants, some of the hierarchical nature of the “classical” world stemmed from the idea that there was a “right” and “wrong” way to perform based on single authorial intentions, which of course implies a repertoire of pieces by single “composers.”) Thus, even when “folk” and “classical” are approached from the angle of their communal use, they generally still require the origin-based definitions as a foundation. For further considerations of the interaction between repertoire and the socially defined groups based around the “folk music” and “art music” worlds, see Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 42–6, 65–70.

define themselves by processes of exclusion. (The IFMC definition is one example of the subsequent threefold contrast.) Even the lasting terminology was coming into use in the middle of the nineteenth century. Because the basic constellation of the folk and art music categories, including their emerging relationship to popular music, was in place by around 1850, I have cut off my detailed examination at this point. It would be impossible here properly to document the explosion of creative, scholarly, and lay interest in the relationship of folk music and art music that came in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, or the explosion of the popular music industry at the same time. These later events have been well studied; and in any case, my contention is that such mushrooming effects depended on the ideas laid in place just beforehand – that is, on the ideas outlined in this book.

Nevertheless, since this study's relevance is predicated partly on the fact that the categories continue to underlie today's musical world, I have, especially toward the end of the book, often glanced ahead to show how the patterns examined here have persisted. The labels began to inspire musicians, but often also to entrap them – forcing them into pigeonholes that frequently confined their aesthetic choices and the reception of their pieces. As the categories have lasted to the present, so have both the inspiration and the prejudices they have carried to composers, performers, and listeners. The time thus seems right for a careful musicological investigation into the common origins of the folk/art pairing – covering the interaction of aesthetics and politics with music theory, historiography, disciplinary history, composition, and reception. This investigation should account for the force and persistence of our musical categories – shedding light on how and why “art” composers used “folk” music in their pieces, how and why “folk” musicians and collectors operated, and how and why audiences have developed and divided as they have. In the process, it can also suggest alternatives to the anachronism of projecting modern values and labels backwards into the minds of musicians from the mid-eighteenth century and before, and pose some challenges for reshaping our musical world today.

### **The special roles of Scotland and Germany**

The folk and art music categories have been transnational: by the mid-nineteenth century, every European nation had discovered its own “folk,” and ideas of timeless “art” masterpieces were establishing themselves across Europe and beyond.

Nevertheless, the concepts of folk music and art music formed originally in more focused debates. It turns out that ideas about Scottish music were the initial catalyst in the conceptual polarization that became the folk/art dichotomy. There is a clear reason for Scotland's



primacy in the discourse: the European idea of folklore took form at the pivotal moment during the Enlightenment when the “noble savage” – so far a foreign phenomenon – was sought within Europe, as a remnant of the rural past preserved within modern Western civilization.<sup>23</sup> As will become the subject of Chapter 2, an infatuation with the greatly influential publications of James Macpherson in the early 1760s – purportedly the orally transmitted work of the third-century Celtic bard Ossian – helped make Scotland, for romantically inclined intellectual circles and for the reading public across Europe, the primary conceptual bridge between the “primitive” realm and “civilized” Europe. Macpherson’s Ossian works built cannily on an already raised profile for Scottish music, and were a timely culmination of many favorite cultural and aesthetic themes in play at the time. The works sparked excitement and heated debate across Europe, turning Scotland into the crucible in which emerging ideas of folk music were tested. That is certainly not to say that Scotland provided the first exotic musical fixation in Western Europe. The point is rather that the idea of the “folk” posited a primitive Other that was in fact a stratum within European society, and the Scottish Highlanders were the first to be cast in this role – so the sort of attention given to Scottish music was qualitatively different from earlier cases of primitivism or exoticism. (For example, the “Turkish” or “Janissary” music so popular with Western European composers just before this time had been seen more as an “exotic” ingredient than a “folk” element, and did not, as Scottish music would, spark the polarization of folk and art that later came to encompass all of Europe.) For these reasons, Scotland lay at the heart of the first discussions in English of “national music” (the English-language progenitor of folk music); and for the same reasons it was in an essay on Ossian that Herder coined the term “Volkslied” in Germany.

Meanwhile, the concept of Romantic art music was basically German, and it was in German discourse that the relationship between folk and art music as we know them today was hammered out. German musicians and writers established an aesthetic hierarchy whose summit was art-musical masterpieces that were supposedly universal and timeless precisely because they synthesized and absorbed the folk collective into the mind of the individual composing genius.

I have thus focused on Scotland and Germany in these capacities. Eighteenth- to nineteenth-century commentaries on Scottish music, and German Romantic writing on art music, are each in and of themselves long and richly intertextual paper trails – but, because of their primacy

<sup>23</sup> Giuseppe Cocchiara, in his grand opus *The History of Folklore in Europe* (originally *Storia del folklore in Europa*, 1952; English trans.: Philadelphia: ISHL, 1981), shows this process in action; see esp. 101 and 121 on Rousseau.

and lasting influence, they also interweave with each other intricately. I have chosen to trace these discourses across the whole book. Spot-lighting these particular precedents allows me to support some grander claims with interconnected details, while extending the ideas themselves further afield as the categories spread throughout Europe and beyond. I do draw many transnational comparisons in later sections of the book, but I make no claims to document multiple national histories in detail. I hope rather that any comparisons serve to broaden the applicability of the precedents and cases discussed here, without dissipating the coherence of the specific examples under focus.

The book is arranged broadly as a chronological narrative, though overlapping in a few places so that certain themes can be traced through. In the [first chapter](#), I examine the move from categorizing music by function to categorizing by origin, arguing that the most influential factor in galvanizing the new emphasis on origins during the 1720s was the inception of cultural nationalism. Modern ethnic identities led people to establish the geographical origins of pieces in order to use them as cultural capital, which made possible the idea of cognitive groupings such as “Scottish music.” These national groupings were in turn necessary precursors to the later ideas of folk music and art music. [Chapter 2](#) considers how, once nationalists had established the momentum for a focus on musical origins, attention extended beyond questions of geography to embrace issues of temporal origins, particularly via the shifting connotations of the word *nature*. New views of nature broke down the importance of generic conventions after the middle of the eighteenth century and thus played a crucial role in the recategorization of music. Now, instead of being linked to a framework of timeless genres and musical functions, *nature* came to be understood as the early stage of a teleological historiography in which primitive Others appear as “natural” foils to modern civilized Europeans. The first “primitives” so designated were the “savages,” the “ancients” and the “Orientals,” but this grouping soon expanded to include the “folk.” [Chapter 3](#) considers a further extension of the categorization of music by origin, focusing on the generation that began not only to distinguish music with differing geographical origins, and music with differing temporal origins and hence proximity to nature (“primitive” vs. “modern”), but also to distinguish music representing collective “national” origins from music originating in a single “cultivated” composer.

The next two chapters consider the idea of “national music” – i.e. folk music – that arose from the distinctions sharpened through [Chapters 2–3](#). [Chapter 4](#) traces one of the most profound early results of this idea: the notion of folk modality. [Chapter 5](#) meanwhile considers the role of “tradition” in conceiving folk music since its inception. The word “tradition” was initially treated with skepticism, but eventually came

to stand for authenticity and value in and of itself. By the closing years of the eighteenth century, folk-musical works came to be seen as groups of related variants organically evolving over time as part of tradition, and the value of different variants was determined by the “extramusical” criteria of age and “authenticity.”

Chapter 6 moves to the other side of the binary – to the formulation of art music in modern terms and in Germany. But it also shows the dialectic dependence of the categories: the “art music” concept depended on “the folk” even as it pushed that foundation down to a lower level discursively. Art music staked its claim to universality on the assertion that it synthesized national and pan-national folk collectives into individual works through the agency of the individual genius. To posit this process, composers and critics had to transform the qualities ascribed to folk music as “tradition” – especially genius, authenticity, and organicism – into aesthetic terms they could access and integrate into their own work.

From this point, the modern interdependent categories were largely in place within Germany, and Chapter 7 follows up on their international spread and the lasting effects of their geographical connotations in this process. Following in Scotland’s footsteps, Ireland, Wales, and then Scandinavian and Eastern European countries, were identified, and identified themselves, most closely with folkishness. All of these countries participated in Western European culture, but had historically imported high-esteem musicians and musical styles from Italy or France and then Germany – or had sent their own musicians to these places to ply their trades. In a period of cultural nationalist fervor, cultural arbiters in these musically “peripheral” countries internalized a self-image as musical Others, whose individual national identity could be asserted most proudly in a “natural, folk” style. Meanwhile, as the idea of high “art music” spread in German terms, German values and traditions continued to set the criteria for entrance into this sacred realm. I consider the implications of this situation in the very different ways composers in different countries sought after the shared goal of universality, which was associated with both the folk and art categories.

In the *final chapter*, I look at how “popular music” separated from folk and art music and became a third main grouping, effecting yet another slight adjustment of the folk and art categories and helping to solidify the terminology we use for the different domains. I have finished by considering how this state of affairs – standing much as it did in the 1850s – has implications today in our scholarship and our own musical world.

# 1

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## Function to origin: national identity and national genius emerge, c. 1700–1780

If an average Lowland Scottish gentleman were approached around 1700 and asked to play “One of these things is not like the others” with the list of tunes I presented in my Introduction, he would almost certainly have singled out neither of the two pieces we might choose today – not the French air (the only piece from outside of Scotland) and not the fiddle dance (arguably the only real “folk” tune in modern parlance). Instead, he would probably pick the bagpipe pibroch. He would most likely find this bagpipe music extremely foreign, even strange (whereas he might well know a version of the Lully tune, which circulated around Europe in different forms).<sup>1</sup> Even in the unlikely event that this particular Lowland gentleman just happened to possess enough Highland connections to have a passing familiarity with the pibroch genre and its stylized ornaments and repetitions, he would probably still consider the bagpipe piece the odd one out. Unlike the other two melodies, the pibroch was an occasional piece with a rigid set of performance rules, and it did not lend itself to dancing. In other words: for the purpose of categorizing the pieces, the Lowland gentleman would not really care who wrote them, or even where they came from. He would want to know how they *functioned*, how they were being used in a specific circumstance. Not just this Lowland gentleman, but his wife, his tenant farmers – indeed almost anyone living in Europe at the turn of the eighteenth century – would have categorized music primarily in this manner.

A major transition was about to take place, however: by the last third of the century, when it came to categorizing musical practice, music’s

<sup>1</sup> On continental versions of the tune, see *Monumenta Musica Neerlandica*, 2: xxxvi–xxxvii, and piece no. xxv in this volume. For examples of Scottish circulation, see the Panmure manuscripts, National Library of Scotland MSS 9459–61 (partbooks), and Matthew Spring, “The Balcarres Lute Book,” *The Lute* 32 (1992), 24.

origins were becoming as important as its specific occasional functions. This transfer of emphasis from function to origin made “folk music” and “art music” potentially meaningful ideas.

### High-middle-low as function: genre and style into the eighteenth century

Before moving on to examine the new emphasis on origins that set across the century, however, we should briefly consider the reigning method for categorizing music before that time: genre. What I want to stress about the strong idea of genre that held sway until near the end of the eighteenth century is that every aspect – definitions, conditions, and conventions – boiled down to questions of function rather than origin.<sup>2</sup> One commonly invoked literary definition of genre argues persuasively that the word must take into account both “inner” attributes (conventional subject matter and attitudes) and “outer” manifestations (conventional figural or formal turns for articulating the “inner” aims).<sup>3</sup> This double definition can be transferred to musical genre as well. In Baroque music in the early seventeenth century, musical genres such as *sonata da chiesa*, *sonata da camera*, or opera signaled appropriate “inner” subject matter and setting (solemn music for church, dance suites for chamber, etc.), which in turn implied or worked with “outer” elements of form or arrangement (number, length, form and position of movements, instrumentation, etc.). Since both the inner and outer attributes of a genre were determined by the setting and social *function* of the piece, applying Romantic or modern origin-centric musical thinking to this earlier era can lead to misinterpretation of some of the keywords of the time.

<sup>2</sup> In genre theory, it is common to invoke “form” (rather than “origin”) in opposition to “function,” but in critical orientations from the eighteenth century and earlier, function basically determined form. Formal manifestations of a work were seen as the product of its intended and actual use. Even texts on “poetics” – that is, on the creative process – explained that process in terms of intended function. There seems to be a clear shift somewhere around 1800 from this long-dominant idea that function (broadly conceived) determined form to an idea that origin should determine form, i.e. that the skill and personal genius of the author or composer generated unique forms, and that genres were not universal reflections of nature but historical constructions (see David Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory* [Harlow: Longman, 2000], 3–6). Furthermore, while some modern genre theorists may include origin as a fundamental part of determining genre, it should be remembered that eighteenth-century ideas of genre did not widen their scope thus. So the opposition of “function” and “origin” makes sense to emphasize my points about genre in the eighteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> See René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), 241. In music, there are additional elements pertaining to expectations in performance setting, audience behavior, etc. For a thoughtful musical consideration of “generic contracts,” see Jeffrey Kallberg, “The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin’s Nocturne in G Minor,” *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 11 (1988), esp. 243–6.

In particular, the common labels “high” and “low” in musical categorization of the eighteenth century and before did not carry the connotations they would later pick up of “high” art music and “low” or common folk or popular music. References to high and low “styles” abound in contemporary musical discourse; however, style was historically considered from the point of view of its propriety for different uses – i.e. genres – and was thus another word that invoked questions of function rather than origin. At the heart of musical categories in the early eighteenth century still lay ideas akin to Cicero’s *genera dicendi* – the high, middle, and low styles as eternally available, functional “outer” approaches to different “inner” thematic content. Practical manuals mapped these styles onto appropriate emotions via meters, melodic figures, dance motions, and so forth. A good example of this approach can be found in the German theorist Johann Mattheson’s famous 1739 text *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*.<sup>4</sup> Mattheson maps “the high, middle, and low styles” onto the representation of the “noble, moderate or trifling” respectively. He makes explicit the link of genre and style to function at the very start of his section “On the Style of Music,” arguing that just as language has different styles for “religious writings, as well as in law, at court, in government offices, in lecture halls, in letter and in daily intercourse,” so music, “since its usage extends to churches, theaters and chambers, would also show great variety.”<sup>5</sup> Here Mattheson considered the question of whether the high, middle, and low styles in music could be plotted directly onto the other typical three-way generic categorization of music from his time: the church, theater, and chamber styles (labels that inherently make clear their functional basis as well). In these long-standing methods of categorizing music, high and low groupings did not show any more concern for origins than did literary categorizations since antiquity: any single author could produce high or low specimens as appropriate. (In literature, after all, Virgil had long been upheld as a single author who had produced archetypal works representing the high, middle, and low styles.<sup>6</sup>) Mattheson reminds us only that music must remain “natural” – true to its sentiments and characters, whether at any given moment it is portraying the “high,” the “middle,” or the “low.”

<sup>4</sup> Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), part I, ch. 10, items 1–33. See Johann Mattheson’s *Der vollkommene Capellmeister: A Revised Translation with Critical Commentary*, trans. Ernest C. Harriss (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), 189–96.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, quotes from pp. 190, 189.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, “Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature,” in Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory*, 133. Jauss here is discussing specifically the medieval conception of *genera dicendi* as including the type of elocution used and the social class of the characters depicted.

Though less meticulously taxonomical than Mattheson, an English example shows the long history and wide diffusion of this way of categorizing. Thomas Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (London, 1597) moves down a gamut of genres, eventually arriving at the bottom:

The last degree of gravity (if they have any at all) is given to the *villanelle*, or country songs, which are made only for the ditty's sake, for, so they be aptly set to express the nature of the ditty, the composer (though he were never so excellent) will not stick to take many perfect chords of one kind together [i.e. use parallel fifths and octaves], for in this kind of music they think it no fault . . . to make a clownish music to a clownish matter.<sup>7</sup>

Morley never enters into the question of whether the villanella style originated with professional composers or among "the folk." That would be a later concern. His focus is the style's use.

One could go still further and note that in many cases, conceptions of genre and style from before and during the eighteenth century not only bypassed questions of who originated materials or styles, but also did not even take much account of who used material; rather, they were primarily concerned with *how* it was used. Perhaps one reason why in this period writers tended to skirt the question of who used material is that the answer was often ambiguous. Public cultural material in the eighteenth century was much more fluid and contiguous than it would later become; most societies in early modern Europe possessed an equivalent of British broadside culture: a wide-ranging, universally shared body of knowledge. This mass of ballads, broadsides, and chapbooks functioned not only to provide musical entertainment, but also to spread news, gossip, religious messages, and propaganda. Though the uses might vary from case to case, the "texts" themselves constituted a culture uniting all strata of society. The elite culture that existed at the time tended to build on and supplement this universal material rather than displace it, making the shared layer a truly communal "popular" culture in a sense of the word that disappeared later.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Gary Tomlinson, ed., "The Renaissance", from *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History*, rev. edn, Leo Treitler, general ed., cited in combined volume (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1998), 480.

<sup>8</sup> For an intriguing in-depth discussion of this shared culture at a slightly earlier period, see Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For the period she examines, Watt defines the "popular" culture and religion of her title as a sort of lowest common denominator: it is the "'shared values,' 'widespread attitudes' and 'commonplace mentalities'" that tie a whole society together (*ibid.*, 3). Cheap print, including broadside ballads, fell into this category, and Watt is interested in showing how its content seems to be aimed at an "inclusive" rather than "exclusive" readership (*ibid.*, 3), including the gentry as well as the peasantry. Watt notes that near the turn of the seventeenth century, ballads began to be frowned upon by some reformed clergy members, because of their



In the narrowest musical sense, melodies themselves were the lowest common denominator of this shared, popular material. In London around 1720, many ballad-singers might have been beggars, but they drew a diverse crowd and they sang the same melodies that were heard in fashionable theater pieces attended by nobility and gentry, and that were available inexpensively on printed half-sheets.<sup>9</sup> In Edinburgh, where until the "new town" was built in the late eighteenth century, the rich and poor notoriously lived on top of each other in crowded tenements, they shared the same space, news, and melodies to an even greater extent.<sup>10</sup> Granted, across Europe there were already some composers trying actively to distinguish their work from this foundation by keeping it separate from the music circulating in the "populace," or by hiding it from the populace altogether; but these examples suggest more a guild mentality, in which craft secrets are highly guarded, than a modern sense of high and low art.<sup>11</sup> (This is true especially when the subject matter was music for religious worship.) It was only over the course of the eighteenth century, when more and more aspects of the shared culture came to be associated derogatorily with an idea of "the common masses," that elite culture began to break away from a universal groundwork, began to be based on different material rather than different interpretations of the same material.<sup>12</sup> (Even after that, it

indiscriminate mixing of the bawdy, the merry, and the sacred (*ibid.*, 70). Psalms disentangled themselves from ballads, and popular culture in general became slightly more alienated from certain strata of the educated elite. Nonetheless, the exchange of tunes that was now frowned upon by some churchmen continued apace into the eighteenth century, especially after the church itself became less ubiquitously dominant in people's lives. For a similar approach to some popular culture in France around the same time, see Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975).

<sup>9</sup> See for example Edmond McAdoo Gagey, *Ballad Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), 24–35; and William Henry Irving, *John Gay's London: Illustrated From the Poetry of the Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 183–220.

<sup>10</sup> See David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People: 1680–1830* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961) for a cultural consideration of this Edinburgh environment. The famous 1704 quote by Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, an opponent of the Act of Union with England – "I knew a very wise man ... that ... believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation" – rings true because of the universal nature of balladry (quoted in Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism* [London and New York: Routledge, 1994], 7).

<sup>11</sup> See for example Heinrich W. Schwab, *Sangbarkeit, Popularität und Kunstlied: Studien zu Lied und Liedästhetik der mittleren Goethezeit, 1770–1814* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1965), 92, for some striking examples from the seventeenth century; and Walter Wiora, *Europäische Volksmusik und abendländische Tonkunst* (Kassel: Johann Philipp Hinrichthal-Verlag, 1957), 90–1, for examples from an earlier period.

<sup>12</sup> On this general trend see Harry C. Payne, "Elite Versus Popular Mentality in the Eighteenth Century," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 8 (1979), 3–32. Peter Burke places the separation somewhat earlier (in *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* [London: Temple Smith, 1978], which spans the years from about 1500 to 1800; see pp. 23–9 on his definition of popular, and pp. 244–86, 3–23 on changing views toward



would take additional time for the “high” and “low” cultural worlds to disentangle themselves more thoroughly.)

In keeping with these social structures and shared material, until some point in the eighteenth century the same tune might even be placed into different enough roles that it could be sometimes high, sometimes low; and its “style” could be a question of performance, accompaniment, and interpretation rather than any abstracted feature associated with it as a reified “work.” The very idea that musical texts are stable, abstracted works that transcend and outlast particular performances, scores, or recordings – what Lydia Goehr has termed the “work-concept” – is often anachronistic to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;<sup>13</sup> and I would argue that this is partly because it relies on questions of origin for its power. A strong work-concept is a natural corollary to an emphasis on musical origins, since any focus on the individual origins of a tune or piece requires a sense that it in fact has an abstracted essence that can be traced across time and space. (Although Goehr focuses on the art music side of the “work-concept” – arguing that emphasis on the musical “work” was closely linked with the idea of the Romantic and transcendent artist-genius – the work-concept would actually come, in different forms, to be essential in both the origin-dependent art *and* folk categories as they emerged.) In any case, since such attention to origins was lacking in the early eighteenth century, the same melodies (or occasionally ground basses) appearing in various music collections could in fact be considered different “pieces” at different times – based on their arrangement, presentation, style, and overall function – and regardless of their *Ur*-origins.

In sum, as late as the early eighteenth century, for musicians and listeners across Europe’s musical spheres – literate or otherwise, rich or

“popular culture”). Burke, however, often conflates different kinds of material, and the spread of material with its uses by different groups. For me, the separation of space between classes in the seventeenth century and a growing disdain for superstition on the part of many educated groups does not outweigh the significant amount of material that continued to be shared between these groups. As will become obvious, I will apply the same sort of argument that Burke applies to sixteenth-century collectors (i.e. that they were not collecting “folk” material because they did not distinguish that material from general knowledge, see pp.281–2) to much later collectors of the early eighteenth century, people Burke does seem to consider as dealing with “folk” material.

<sup>13</sup> Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). She has taken the term “work-concept” from the German *Werkbegriff*. While the strongest version of Goehr’s claim that the work-concept did not exist before the nineteenth century has been controversial (see especially Reinhard Strohm, “Looking Back at Ourselves: The Problem with the Musical Work-Concept,” in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention*, ed. Michael Talbot [Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000], 128–52), most musicologists now agree at least that the “work-concept” has waxed and waned in European musical thought, being fairly absent in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and attaining a particular strength and centrality from the nineteenth.

poor, rural or urban – the primary issue in categorizing a tune was how it would be used on a particular occasion, and what sentiments it depicted. If musicians were trained in literate discourse, the matter of genre would present itself. If not, they would address the same questions in other terms. For the arrangement and layout of material, there was an available spectrum from high to low; but, paralleling the situation in literature, these characterizations were attached to the expressive and situational purposes of the music – its function – and not to any origin-based criteria, such as its presumed composer or its first intended public. Not only did “low” material not carry the implication that it originated among the peasants; there often was not even an implication that it was used by real peasants. Morley’s discussion of the villanella is only concerned with how it might be used to portray peasants – or earthy emotions. And Mattheson’s use of the word “common” does not imply music “originating in the masses” (the later sense of the word), but rather music that describes daily, “low” sentiments as opposed to exalted or noble ones.<sup>14</sup> Writers such as Morley and Mattheson are concerned only with why and how composers use “low” styles to fit the subject matter and style of certain poems or musical occasions. Framed from another viewpoint: class, gender, and other social differences were manifest primarily in how different people used and reacted to the same melody – what accompaniment they gave it, what purposes they put it to, or what environment they heard it in. To a large extent, once divorced from its original context, a tune was a tune. It had no essential platonic form, no essence that was private property – so it did not really matter whether it was conceived for a courtly masque or whether it was born in a barn in the next town. What mattered was its suitability and adaptation to the purpose at hand.

### **The quest for origins begins**

After 1720, things began to change. Not suddenly: many of the above characterizations held true past the middle of the century, some until near its end.<sup>15</sup> But a constant (if non-linear) increase in emphasis on musical origins was the trend.

<sup>14</sup> Note that even Mattheson’s discussion of certain “peasant dances” (*Capellmeister*, items 30–1, pp. 195–6) is about composers and their pretensions or misjudgments rather than truly about “peasants.” The concern here too is with accurately portraying peasants rather than with the origin of these dance melodies. Similarly, his discussion of the ballad is concerned only with the fact that although the etymology of the genre implies dancing, ballads are actually primarily strophic, sung pieces (459); once again, function is central while origins are not touched upon.

<sup>15</sup> This is especially true in music theory and composition manuals. See for example Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes* (Berlin and Königsberg, 1771–9). Yet another example of this thinking is the mix of characters and their associated

There are different ways of thinking about origins: the most specific issue today concerns the *personal* point of first origin of individual works – that is, who wrote the music. However, back in the eighteenth century, proprietary authorship and copyright law was just emerging in the literary sphere, based on a new distinction between “discovering” and “inventing” material.<sup>16</sup> So we should not expect to see much consistency of categorization by personal origin here. It was still often presumed that since the materials from which an author built a literary text or a piece of music were available to everyone, the finished product was the work of a skilled craftsman (with the right to be paid a lump sum for his labors, and a right to have his name on products to further his career and reputation) – but not an author or composer in the modern sense of an “artist.”<sup>17</sup> England had the most advanced publishing and distribution system in Europe, including Europe’s first modern copyright legislation (the “Statute of Anne,” which came into effect in 1710). Even there, though, for the better part of the century the stipulations of copyright law often did more to protect those who printed and distributed material than those who authored it in the modern sense.<sup>18</sup> Around mid-century, despite several landmark London court cases pertaining to copyright issues, some involving music,<sup>19</sup> there was no consistent modern formulation of the author or composer

“appropriate” modes of musical expression in Italian comic opera through the end of the century: “seria” arias for “high characters” mingled with simpler styles to depict middling and low characters.

<sup>16</sup> On this and other crucial shifts in conceiving authors during the eighteenth century, see Michel Foucault’s essay “What is an Author?” trans. Josué Harari in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1984), 101–20; Roger Chartier, “Figures of the Author,” in *The Order of Books*, trans. Lydia C. Cochrane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), ch. 2; Carla Hesse, “Enlightenment Epistemology and the Laws of Authorship in Revolutionary France, 1777–1793,” *Representations* 30 (1990), 109–37; Mark Rose, “Author as Proprietor: Donaldson vs. Becket and the Genealogy of Modern Authorship,” *Representations* 23 (1988), 51–85; Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Martha Woodmansee, “The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the ‘Author,’” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17 (1984), 425–48 – this and other essays are also reprinted in her book *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); and Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>17</sup> Although after Locke the fruits of an author’s efforts came to be seen as his “property,” they did not add up to a transcendent artwork in the nineteenth-century sense. Since inspiration was seen most often as external, authors’ rights remained primarily an issue of labor rather than creative inspiration or originality.

<sup>18</sup> See for example Rose, “Author as Proprietor,” 51–8; Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Probably the first musical copyright case was brought by Francesco Geminiani in the 1730s, followed by more extended cases involving Thomas Arne in 1741, and J. C. Bach in the 1770s. See Ronald J. Rabin and Steven Zohn, “Arne, Handel, Walsh, and Music as Intellectual Property: Two Eighteenth-Century Lawsuits,” *JRMA* 120 (1995), 112–13; and John Small, “J. C. Bach Goes to the Law,” *Musical Times* 126 (1985), 526–9.

as original creator anywhere in Europe. Of course, copyright law is not an exact gauge of complex attitudes across society, and certainly, from case to case, and individual to individual, composers were seen in a different light.<sup>20</sup> But in any case, notions of the author in the earlier eighteenth century were very different from ours.<sup>21</sup> With copyright and "authorship" often representing the most recent source rather than the primary "*Ur-source*,"<sup>22</sup> the role of author was still generally conceived as the *presenter* – the assembler or relay of material that itself was basically God-given and in the public domain.

When claims of authorship did go beyond the practical level of presenting and arranging material for a specific function, the author's role was generally more abstract and symbolic than we today conceive it – again since inspiration in the early eighteenth century was still generally recognized as coming from God (or from the muses or another symbolic origin outside the individual).<sup>23</sup> In France, for

<sup>20</sup> There were isolated early cases in which musical authorship appears to have been treated in fairly modern terms. Handel's rival in London, Giovanni Bononcini, was censured for his part in presenting a madrigal of the Italian composer Lotti under his own name to the Academy of Ancient Music (see Lowell Lindgren, "The Three Great Noises 'Fatal to the Interests of Bononcini,'" *Musical Quarterly* 61 [1975], 560–83, esp. 564–71; and William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992], 60). However, this case was exceptional. Besides the political/religious motivations behind the whole affair, the madrigal involved was an entire finished product, meant to be an exemplar of an established "ancient" style, not just a part of a larger score or performance; so Bononcini could hardly have claimed to be involved as its author, even as a craftsman.

<sup>21</sup> Several scholars have pointed to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as another period during which the composer was seen in a strongly individualized and respected role as creator. See Hansjörg Pohlmann, *Die Frühgeschichte des musikalischen Urheberrechts (ca. 1400–1800): Neue Materialien zur Entwicklung des Urheberrechtsbewusstseins der Komponisten* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962), esp. 19–26; Edward Lowinsky, "Musical Genius: Evolution and Origins of a Concept," in Lowinsky, *Music in the Culture of the Renaissance and Other Essays*, ed. Bonnie J. Blackburn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 40–66. These arguments (especially Lowinsky's treatment of Glarean on pp. 50–1) are quite persuasive about the state of affairs in the sixteenth century (though we must still keep in mind different values – for example the greater Renaissance emphasis on contrapuntal skill and lesser emphasis on melodic originality, etc.). However, such arguments fall into more worrying distortions in discussing the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries because they read words such as "genius," "invention," and "craft" to transmit the same connotations and relative values that they would after 1770 or so (see for example Lowinsky, "Musical Genius," 44–6, 49); a similar problem occurs in Walter Wiora, "Musica poetica und musikalisches Kunstwerk," in *Festschrift Karl Gustav Fellerer zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Heinrich Huschen (Regensburg: G. Bosse, 1962), 579–89.

<sup>22</sup> Thus note that the German word "*Urheber*" first applied to myths of world-creation and family ancestry, and only later accrued new authorial meaning, primarily in copyright cases of the late eighteenth century (see Woodmansee, "Genius and the Copyright," 445; and *Grimm's deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. "*Urheber*").

<sup>23</sup> Woodmansee, "Genius and the Copyright," 426–7.

example, the issuing of publication “privileges” by the king reflected this symbolic origin: because ideas were held to be part of the total body of knowledge, rather than private property, and because inspiration was divine and the king was France’s link to divinity through birth, it was held that the king himself should have his name attached first and foremost to ideas when they became public.<sup>24</sup> The name of a monarch attached to a new publication was hence symbolically as significant as the name of the writer or compiler who assembled the ideas (divine truths) in the work at hand; and the royal printing privileges granted in most European countries at this time reflected the status not only of the writer or composer whose work was granted a privilege, but also of the patron or monarch. Thus the two primary conceptions of authorship for much of the eighteenth century were practical-functional (author as relay and assembler of material) and symbolic (author as divine channel).

Even after more modern concepts of authorship and intellectual property came forth in the literary world around 1760, music was still considered more “ephemeral” than poetry or prose – less “truth” and more “function”<sup>25</sup> – and thus, in musical domains, authorship continued to be conceived primarily in the practical-functional and symbolic roles until near the century’s end. Composers did gain personal fame, but more for their craftsmanship; and “works” became known less for their specific holistic being than as examples of a composer’s renowned contrapuntal or dramatic skill. Unsurprisingly, when melodies became divorced from their originally crafted functional setting – when they became well known enough to circulate outside of professional circles in manuscript and print collections – they often lost their attributions altogether. Numerous tunes originated by Purcell, Handel, and others entered the ballad tradition in Britain without those names attached. When such a tune presentation *was* attributed, the “author” named was again often the *presenter* or arranger of the material – or even a performer who had made a specific piece famous. Consider Lully’s “Sommes-nous pas trop heureux” (no. 3 on my “not like the other” list): if our friend the Lowland gentleman knew this tune, he might have attached any of several authorial names to it. For example, in one famous Scottish lute manuscript of the time,<sup>26</sup> two versions of the tune

<sup>24</sup> Hesse, “Authorship in Revolutionary France,” 111.

<sup>25</sup> The Statute of Anne was not even officially applied to music until the close of J. C. Bach’s case in 1777. On differences between musical and literary copyright law and practice in the eighteenth century, see David Hunter, “Musical Copyright in Britain to 1800,” *Musical and Letters* 67 (1986), 269–82, esp. 276 and 278–82; and Rabin and Zohn, “Music as Intellectual Property,” 115–16. See also Jacques J.-F. Chartier, *Les droits du musicien sur son oeuvre* (Paris: Dalloz, 1923); and Pohlmann, *Frühgeschichte des musikalischen Urheberrechts*.

<sup>26</sup> This is the “Balcarres Manuscript” (National Library of Scotland, MS acc. 9769 84/1/6).

appear, under two slightly different titles – both times with attributions, but not to the same person, and neither one to Lully. The tune makes its first appearance as “Belle Heureuse, with the ninth lowered halfe a note, Mr. Beck’s way”; meanwhile, on its second appearance it carries the tag “by Mr. Lesslie.” (This is not a corruption of “Lully” since Lesslie is credited with several other unrelated pieces in the collection. Lesslie, like Beck, was most likely an arranger.<sup>27</sup>) Such examples of absent or apparently mistaken attributions do not represent a simple carelessness or ignorance on the part of the compiler. Rather, they are typical of broader contemporary attitudes toward authors and texts in this milieu. Even issues such as Handel’s famous “borrowing” must be considered partly in the light that Handel was acting as the presenter and skilled craftsman of his material for each individual function and occasion.<sup>28</sup> This was the situation in the eighteenth century; so before a stronger proto-Romantic conception of musical authors and their works could emerge, there would need to be more focus on tracing music to its *Ur*-origins in the first place.

I suggest that the earliest catalyst for the extended classification by origins was nationalism. Cultural nationalists needed to claim communal property, which eventually included tunes. If they could show that a melody originated in the right place, it could become cultural capital. Such thinking created a habit of viewing music in terms of abstract reified “works” – or at least, initially, reified tunes – whose origins mattered.

When nationalism crystallized into a large-scale political movement around 1790, it relied on an awareness of community on a national scale – “national consciousness” or “identity” – as an essential prerequisite.<sup>29</sup> Although this national consciousness predated political nationalism slightly, it was founded upon many of the same Enlightenment ideas. Nations had previously been conceived as “races” – almost as extended families – based on visions of shared, endogamous ancestry. As long as race-nations were conceived this way, group identities were determined

<sup>27</sup> See Spring, “Balcarres Lute Book,” 9, 12, and 24. See also Evelyn Florence Stell, “Sources of Scottish Instrumental Music, 1603–1707,” 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of Glasgow, 1999), 1: 20–37.

<sup>28</sup> John Roberts has shown that Handel took care to cover his tracks (see for example “Handel and Vinci’s *Didone abbandonata*: Revisions and Borrowings,” *Music and Letters* 68 [1987], 149–50); but to some extent this seems to reflect his professional need to be recognized as the presenter and craftsman of material, and as having a good sense of drama as well. (Of course Handel generally did rework material he borrowed to make it appropriate for each new function.)

<sup>29</sup> I will use “national consciousness” and “national identity” as synonyms, though some scholars of nationalism have debated which terms are most appropriate for this concept or group of concepts. See for example Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), 14 and ch. 4; Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1945), 3–4.



either within close-knit local communities (the lower classes tended to ignore the idea of nation completely), or (among those worldly enough to conceive of national differences) through imagined bloodlines and allegiances to monarchs sanctioned by divine right. The origins of such racial “nations” were often symbolic and religious: in Europe such groups commonly traced their histories directly to Noah and his descendants.

John Locke’s vision of humans as blank slates at birth was a milestone in its political and philosophical implications.<sup>30</sup> Locke had unleashed the nature-nurture question, to profound and lasting implications. This never-fully-answerable question inspired or required many Europeans to rethink their identities. To conceive of a collective will, for example, Rousseau had to delineate a group identity without resorting to bloodlines or divine right. The only recourse was to shared culture, which became the primary way an ethnic “nation” might justify self-government.<sup>31</sup> “Race” and “nation” thus separated into distinct concepts, but their relationship remained a morass – for to answer how they were related to each other, one almost needed to answer the underlying nature-nurture question itself.<sup>32</sup> A common solution to this unwieldy philosophical dilemma, widely applied in musical writing, was to revert to a mystified cultural essentialism – in a sense bypassing the whole question that provoked the interest in the first place. The essential “character” of various musical cultures was increasingly established without regard to the debate raging over how that character was formed.

Such characterization nevertheless required a deep sense of national consciousness; and since such consciousness relied heavily on economic and sociological conditions,<sup>33</sup> national cultural identity spread

<sup>30</sup> The most relevant of Locke’s works here is *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London, 1690). See Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Thought* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 10–13.

<sup>31</sup> Hence (as often asserted) “cultural” and “political” nationalism are but two sides of the same coin. Both rely on the new link between “citizenship” roles and naturally occurring cultural boundaries (rather than on divine right); cultural nationalism is a sort of drive toward political nationalist ends, emerging most strongly where a political nation-state was or is not attainable in the moment. For a good discussion of this phenomenon focusing on two primary figures, see F. M. Barnard, “National Culture and Political Legitimacy: Herder and Rousseau,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44 (1983), 231–53.

<sup>32</sup> See Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), and Clive J. Christie, ed., *Race and Nation: A Reader* (London and New York: I. B. Taurus, 1998) for a good selection of contemporary viewpoints on this issue. See also Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 320–2.

<sup>33</sup> Different scholars have framed these conditions in very different and sometimes opposing terms, but they have tended to include: mercantile trade; the spread of literacy and print culture; the increased use of vernacular languages among the governing and the prominent trading classes (and thus later among the intellectual bourgeoisie); and the weakening or dissolution of local feudal governments. See for example Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), esp. the

unevenly at first. In charting the emergence of ethnic-national musical characterizations, we do well to take a point from Marxist historians: it is a mistake to conflate the national identity of the ruling class before the later eighteenth century with the identities of people in most other strata of society. National consciousness took its time to permeate downward to the point where it could be an effective mass-movement in culture and politics.<sup>34</sup> There had of course been isolated earlier musical characterizations of nations, wherever a writer was well traveled enough and well positioned enough to have contact with foreign cultures in the right way. Already in the twelfth century, the Welsh-Norman monk Giraldus Cambrensis, for example, had described and differentiated the musical practices and achievements of the various British peoples (*gentis/nationis*);<sup>35</sup> but the work of a cleric, circulating in manuscript among isolated (Latin-) literate circles, cannot be taken to stand for mass consciousness. The mid-seventeenth-century *Musurgia Universalis* by the German Athanasius Kircher went further than earlier writings in isolating the "complexio," "natural temperament" and customary musical styles of several nations, ancient and modern; but it too remained within a small erudite community, despite its relatively wide scholarly circulation and an early partial translation from Latin into German.<sup>36</sup> Only in the early eighteenth century did recognition of marked "national" musical styles and genres become much more widespread. Such cosmopolitan thought is evident in the writings of continental theorists such as Scheibe, Mattheson, and Heinechen – and, perhaps more notably, in the musical works of composers such as François Couperin and Johann Joseph Fux – and later of course Bach and Handel.

The histories of individual nations also played a role in when national consciousness spread there. With England's early dissolution of absolutist monarchy encouraging cultural identity rather than divine allegiance, and its advanced trading and colonial conquests bringing its large middle classes into frequent contact with outsiders, national consciousness gained some critical mass there by the later seventeenth

summary on 139–43; Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, esp. Introduction; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (New York: Verso, 1991), esp. 37–46; and Neil Davidson, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2000), 24–46.

<sup>34</sup> See for example E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 10–13, 78–9.

<sup>35</sup> See the famous passage in his *Topographia Hibernica* (available in *Giraldi Cambrensis, Opera*, vol. 5, *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages* 21 [London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867], 153–5).

<sup>36</sup> 1,500 copies of Kircher's treatise were printed. See Margaret Murata's translation and notes in Murata, ed., "The Baroque Era," *Strunk's Source Readings*, rev. edn; cited in combined volume, 707.



century, before it did in most other European countries.<sup>37</sup> Thus, even by the last years of the seventeenth century, and certainly by the beginning of the eighteenth, describing essential national traits was becoming widespread in England, and musical styles were linked to their countries of origin as cultural artifacts. In *The Spectator* – not exactly a plebeian publication but still one of the countless editions of which “served ... as a virtual library of readings for every well-educated person”<sup>38</sup> – Joseph Addison wrote famously in 1711 about the spread of Italian opera, the latest foreign craze:

I must observe, that the Tone, or (as the *French* call it) the Accent of every Nation in their ordinary Speech is altogether different from that of every other People, as we may see even in the *Welsh* and *Scotch*, who border so near upon us ... For this Reason, the Recitative Musick in every Language should be as different as the Tone or Accent of each Language ... It is observed that several of the singing Birds of our own Country learn to sweeten their Voices ... by practising under those that come from warmer Climates. In the same manner I would allow the *Italian* Opera to lend our *English* Musick as much as may grace and soften it, but never entirely to annihilate or destroy it ... A Composer should fit his Musick to the Genius of the People, and consider that the Delicacy of Hearing, and Taste of Harmony, has been formed upon those Sounds which every Country abounds with ...<sup>39</sup>

In Addison's expression “the genius of the people,” the nature-nurture question becomes explicit. This was the thinking that produced the widespread characterization we find in English discourse, mixing linguistic, musical, and essential characters of nations. Origins had begun to play a vital role in categorizing music.

### Scotland's profile comes forward on the international stage: the “Scotch” songs and tunes

While *any* national-essentialist delineations of musical style contributed loosely toward the emergence of the folk and art categories by creating origin-based conceptions of music (“Italian music,” “English music,” etc.), the particular attributes attached to certain nations also played a more specific role in the conception of folk music and art music. As England's historic enemy and largest neighbor on the British mainland, Scotland was bound to figure prominently in early English conceptions of national characters; and because the high international profile of Scottish music later figured so centrally in formulating the

<sup>37</sup> See Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, 166–83.

<sup>38</sup> Donald F. Bond, ed., *The Spectator* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 1: vii.

<sup>39</sup> *Spectator*, no. 29, quoted in *ibid.*, 1: 20–2.

idea of folk music, it is worth zooming in on the early characterizations of musical "Scottishness."

After the Union of the Crowns in 1603 (when James VI of Scotland came to London and became James I of England and Scotland), Scotland was closer than ever before to English events, and by the second half of the 1600s, the cultural juxtaposition was beginning to seep through the public mind in England. Musically, this took the forms of the so-called "Scotch song" and "Scotch tune." Over the second half of the seventeenth century, collections such as John Playford's *English Dancing Master* included more "Scotch" tunes in each edition;<sup>40</sup> and after about 1695, there was also a sizable number of these so-called "Scotch tunes" used as *entr'actes* and incidental music on the London stage. Published in collections of popular theater music, many of them were newly written by eminent English composers.<sup>41</sup>

It is hard to pinpoint much musical consistency between the various pieces called "Scotch tune" in England at this time: more or less any tune could be "Scotch" if it claimed to be.<sup>42</sup> ("Scotch songs" had words on Scottish subjects, often in pidgin Scots dialect; but the "Scotch tunes" appearing without words had no such solid criterion.) As just one example: some "Scotch tunes" were pentatonic or hexatonic, but as many or more were not;<sup>43</sup> though such "modal" features were later to become a marker of Scottish "authenticity," they were obviously not yet established as such.

Rather than having a strong *stylistic* hallmark, it seems that Scotland for the English still represented a more abstract idea of cultural-national essence; and in Scotland's case that essence was "nature." Despite the many inconsistencies, by 1700, when John Dryden compared Chaucer's work to "Scotch songs," with their character of "rude sweetness . . . natural . . . though not perfect,"<sup>44</sup> there was obviously a shared character recognized for these songs. The first edition of the *Encyclopaedia*

<sup>40</sup> See Roger Fiske, *Scotland in Music: A European Enthusiasm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3.

<sup>41</sup> For a good summary, see *ibid.*, 5–13.

<sup>42</sup> See *ibid.*, esp. pp. 12–13. Fiske does try hard to isolate characteristics of these tunes, but by his own admission this is difficult, and, I would argue, not really to the point.

<sup>43</sup> The 1719 edition of Thomas D'Urfey's *Wit and Mirth: Or, Pills to Purge Melancholy* contains many songs designated as "Scotch Songs." Some have traits that would later be recognized as "Scottish" by the Scots; others do not. "Just when the Young and Blooming Spring" (2: 30, "sung to the King at Windsor") has a flat seventh in the third phrase, as do several others; one or two, such as "Catherine Logy," have the Scottish "double tonic" effect (see below, pp. 141–2); "By Moonlight" (5: 102) "sung by Mr. Lucas at the old theatre," has many wide leaps. Meanwhile, like many others, "As I Sat at my Spinning Wheel" (3: 88) has no particular "Scottish" traits at all – it even modulates to the dominant.

<sup>44</sup> From Dryden's *Fables Ancient and Modern* (1700), quoted in David Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 131.

*Britannica* (1771) would later note that the word “nature” was ambiguous, sometimes meaning “universal nature” and sometimes meaning the “essential natures of things themselves.”<sup>45</sup> But in this case there was no difference: for the English, the “essential nature” of the Scots was “universal nature” – the pastoral, the innocent, the rustic, even the wild.

Much of the English vision of their neighbors came from the stereotypical image of the Highlander. The Gaelic-speaking Scots seemed to outsiders a sectarian and ungovernable group, still ruled by feudal and barbaric clan allegiances, and impenetrable both linguistically and geographically. They were often called the “Wild Scots.”<sup>46</sup> In the early eighteenth century, the Lowland Scots themselves still saw the Highlanders in this light – as fierce, dangerous, and unpredictable neighbors – and communication between the two groups was difficult because of the language barrier.<sup>47</sup> Lowlanders with aspirations to be accepted by the English establishment set about disassociating themselves from Highland culture as much as they could, choosing instead to incorporate elements of English or French culture.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, since the English saw all Scots as natural innocents or unruly barbarians, it was easy to identify them all with the Highlanders – including for marketing reasons – and the Englishman Henry Playford (John Playford’s son) was among the first to do so publicly. In 1700 he published his *Collection of Original Scots Tunes (Full of the Highland Humours) for the Violin: Being the First of this Kind yet Printed*. The so-called “Highland Humours” were a gimmick; the tunes in this book were drawn from the same Anglo-Scottish stock circulating broadly in Lowland Scottish and northern English manuscripts of the time. But other printers soon capitalized on the same exotic stereotype,<sup>49</sup> helping to establish the first widespread characterization of “Scottish music” as a whole.

<sup>45</sup> S.v. “Nature.”

<sup>46</sup> This moniker was recorded with reference to the Highlanders as early as 1521 by John Mair (see Davidson, *Origins of Scottish Nationhood*, 65).

<sup>47</sup> T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560–1830* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969), 111–13, 332–4. Edmund Burt had noted in the 1720s that Lowlanders did not even venture into the Highlands without first making a will, and indeed such perceptions lasted most of the way through the century. See Davidson, *Origins of Scottish Nationhood*, 63–72, 75–6; T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation: 1700–2000* (London: Penguin, 1999), 231–3.

<sup>48</sup> Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, one of the Scottish politicians who signed the Treaty of Union in 1707, and himself an amateur composer who had studied with Corelli in Rome, was one of the many Lowlanders trying to rewrite Scottish history at the time to erase the idea that Scotland had once been a Celtic nation either linguistically or racially (see Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 29).

<sup>49</sup> John Young repeated the Highland reference in *A Collection of Original Scotch Tunes for the Violin: The Whole Pleasant and Comical, Being Full of the Highland Humour* (London, c. 1721–8). There was also a London ballad opera by Joseph Mitchell called *The Highland Fair: Or, Union of the Clans* (London: John Watts, 1731).

With English characterizations of Scotland rife – and with many English theater tunes passed off as “Scotch,” it seemed only natural for public cultural counterstatements to be made by Scots themselves. The biggest obstacle to establishing an idea of cultural “Scottishness” from within was again the Highland–Lowland divide. Scotland remained, culturally speaking, two “nations.” The situation was exacerbated by the two abortive Jacobite uprisings in 1715 and 1745. The latter especially (“the forty-five”), led by the exiled Stuart heir “Bonny Prince Charlie,” had elements of civil war, with many Whig Lowlanders on the “English” side. Still, factors such as the Act of Union with England in 1707 were bringing the Scots together despite their divisions, since nationalism generally emerges in response to a perceived threat. The Act of Union was not the first time that Scotland had felt itself under attack from the south, but what was new was that the threat of English hegemony was now framed not in terms of politics and economics, but in terms of culture. Despite provisions in the Act for maintenance of the Scottish church and legal systems, the juggernaut of English cultural dominance seemed poised to overtake Scottish ways of life, and left the Scots scrambling to embrace and protect these institutions. For the first time, Scottish patriots saw their mission in terms of national consciousness. They realized the power of creating an idea of Scotland as a *cultural* entity – especially in a sudden burst of activity around 1720.<sup>50</sup> In 1719, the poet Allan Ramsay had begun printing *Scots Songs* in Edinburgh (the words only, with tunes named). Here, and in Ramsay’s many similar collections over the subsequent years, the English image of “Scotland” was for the first time taken over, adapted, improved, and internalized by a Scot. Ramsay accepted and enlarged upon the idyllic side of Scotland’s “natural” connotations. (He wrote a Scots pastoral, *The Gentle Shepherd*, in 1725.) Meanwhile, though Ramsay was not a prude – and was in fact vocal against the Kirk’s over-zealous suppression of life’s pleasures – in his publications aimed at the export market (and at women), he either ignored or set out deliberately to suppress the uncouth and rude side of the English image of Scotland.<sup>51</sup> He wanted to advance Scotland based on its own cultural capital.

<sup>50</sup> There was a rash of literary activity promoting Scottish culture around this time. James Watson published the ballad “Hardyknute” in 1719, later discovered to be largely the work of Lady Wardlaw (see Thomas F. Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Literature: A Succinct History* [London: David Nutt, 1898], 395–6); and William Hamilton of Gilbertfield’s paraphrase of “Blind Harry’s” famous medieval heroic epic *The Wallace* appeared in 1722. Its patriotic overtones could now be read in a new ethnic-national light. (It was through this version of the epic that Robert Burns was later inspired to write his famous “Scots wha hae.”)

<sup>51</sup> See Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Literature*, 401–4, and Burns Martin, *Allan Ramsay: A Study of His Life and Works* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931),

Ramsay worked tirelessly to paper over internal divisions and forge an image of Scotland that included both Highland and Lowland as a single entity. Seeking to balance the Italian musical influence, Ramsay's poem "To the Music Club" (1721) contains a powerful, conscious effort to breach cultural barriers within Scotland that would hitherto have been forbidding:

And shew that Musick may have as good Fate  
In *Albion's* [Scotland's] Glens as *Umbria's* [Italy's] green Retreat:  
And with *Correlli's* soft *Italian* Song,  
Mix *Cowdon Knows* and *Winter nights* are long.  
Nor should the Martial *Pibrough* be despis'd,  
Own'd and refin'd by you, these shall the more be priz'd ...<sup>52</sup>

Ramsay's urgings for his countrymen to "own" and "refine" *all* of the cultural artifacts that could be claimed by Scotland – including both Lowland songs ("Cowden Knows," etc.) and Highland pibroch – helped create a native vision of a unified "Scotland" to balance the English stereotypes.

Almost immediately, professional composers in Scotland began fulfilling the wishes Ramsay laid out in his 1721 poem that they "own and refine" their national musical capital. A group of Scottish composers created what David Johnson has called the "Scots Drawing Room Style"<sup>53</sup> – taking the common stock of (primarily Lowland) Scottish melodies that had been appearing in Scottish manuscripts, adding simple figured bass lines and other contemporary *galant* features, and publishing collections of these settings for a bourgeois audience, both in London and in Scotland. Songbooks and soon harmonized tune collections for instruments proliferated, especially once the most prominent Scottish composers of the day, James Oswald and William McGibbon, became involved around 1740. Similarly, Ramsay's attempts to join Highland and Lowland music into a single "national" corpus were carried forward. Oswald's *Curious Collection of Scots Songs* of 1740 was the first to include several Gaelic titles and melodies in a collection published under the banner of "Scottish" music, and by mid-century such mixes had become common. (A whole dance type, the "reel," soon became recognized as both generally "Scottish" and specifically associated with the Highlands.) Meanwhile, Oswald's

esp. 46–7, 105–6. On Ramsay's different approach to his presumed male and female audiences in different publications, see Harker, *Fakesong*, 10.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from the facsimile in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, ed. Burns Martin, Alexander Kinghorn *et al.*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1945–74), 1: 194–5.

<sup>53</sup> David Johnson, *Scottish Fiddle Music in the Eighteenth Century: A Music Collection and Historical Study* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984), 34.

emigration to London and his publications there helped continue to export native framings of the Scottish national character.

National identities and characterizations are fickle and convenient, however. Just as the Scots' own unified self-image was growing stronger, their unique profile in England temporarily declined. In the 1720s, when Scotland seemed (at least for the moment) to have been absorbed comfortably into the Union, and Italian opera began to take over the fashionable London stage, Italy came to represent a larger imposition on English culture than Scotland; and, in its typically defensive way, English cultural nationalism realigned itself to reflect this. The positive elements of the "natural" Scottish character, such as "simplicity" and "straightforwardness," were lifted out and fused to the English self-image to present a "British" national character.<sup>54</sup> "Ballad operas," beginning with John Gay's tremendously popular *Beggar's Opera* (1728), positioned this new body of British music as a whole (now including the "Scotch songs") as a "sensible" alternative to the ornaments and artifice of the Italian music.<sup>55</sup> As Italy became the new foil in England, the rage for the exotic "Scotch" song as such faded temporarily. Aside from James Oswald's own collections published in London in the 1740s, there was from the 1730s a temporary decline in specifically Scottish collections published south of the border – replaced by groupings stressing British coherence, such as the six-volume *British Musical Miscellany: Or, The Delightful Grove: Being a Collection of Celebrated English and Scotch Songs: By the Best Masters: Set for the Violin, German Flute, the Common Flute, and Harpsichord*.<sup>56</sup> Even more telling was *Calliope: Or, English Harmony: A Collection of the Most Famous English and Scotch Songs*,<sup>57</sup> in which the "Scotch" was actually subsumed under the heading of "English harmony."

<sup>54</sup> On Scottish music as part of British nationalism, an element that waxed and waned over the century, see Claire Nelson, "The Influence of Scotland in London's Musical Life During the Eighteenth Century: With Specific Reference to Violin Repertoire" (Ph.D. diss., Royal College of Music, 2002), esp. the Introduction, 35–45, 100–1, and the Epilogue.

<sup>55</sup> This was in 1728. In 1732, Aaron Hill asked Handel to "deliver us from our Italian Bondage" and attempts were made at establishing an English opera company (quoted in *New Grove*, rev. edn, s.v. "London," 15: 116). For detailed investigation of nationalism in the English reception of opera, see Suzanne Aspden, "Ballads and Britons: Imagined Community and the Continuity of 'English' Opera," *JRMA* 122 (1997), 24–51; and Aspden, "'An Infinity of Factions': Opera in Eighteenth-Century Britain and the Undoing of Society," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9 (1997), 1–19. For an interesting early discussion of English opera as an ongoing reaction to foreign intrusions, see Cecil Forsyth, *Music and Nationalism: A Study of English Opera* (London: Macmillan, 1911), esp. 93–119. Forsyth was caught up in contemporary views of race and culture, but his insistence in reading politics into music history was more novel at the time.

<sup>56</sup> London: J. Walsh, 1734–7. <sup>57</sup> 2 vols. (London: Henry Roberts, 1739–46).



Although the uprising of 1745 also temporarily derailed the Scots' own efforts to advance a strong united image of their country, the long-term effects were just the opposite of divisive, and ultimately reinforced Scotland's unity at home and her image abroad. Despite its immediately disastrous effects on the Scots, the defeat of the "forty-five" further cemented the link between political entities and cultural traits. This was evidenced by the English attempt to punish the Scots by banning Highland *dress* and arms after the uprising. Furthermore, such suppression backfired, increasing Scottish pride in banned elements of their cultural heritage, and even helping to heal the Highland–Lowland divide within Scotland, as wounds from the unfair collective punishment were nursed by all Scots together. By the last third of the eighteenth century, Jacobitism was being reinvented, and its history rewritten. Divested of its teeth, and transformed from a dynastic clash into a cultural movement, Jacobitism was increasingly invoked (along with other elements closely or loosely associated with Highland culture) as a symbol of Scotland's general cultural history, setting it apart from England rather than dividing Scotland itself. In other words, the Scots had reclaimed the "Highland" character from English stereotypes and made it into their own national identity and cultural export.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, the "forty-five" had also brought Scotland back strongly into English consciousness as a unique entity, rather than a smoothly integrated part of "Britain." Scotland's international profile was on the rise again, with a vengeance, and the idea of "Scottish music" would cease to be just one more characterization along national lines: the specific character assigned to Scotland – the wild and natural – would soon take on new connotations, moving toward what later became "folk music." This will be picked up in Chapter 2.

### **David Rizzio versus James I: myths for their respective times**

The changing myths of origin associated with Scottish music over the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reflect marvelously the shifting emphases in the search for the origins of musical works – and the emergence of new categories for classifying these works.<sup>59</sup> As a summary of this [first chapter](#), we can trace the first part of this saga, in which national-geographical concerns come to the fore.

<sup>58</sup> See William Donaldson, *The Jacobite Song: Political Myth and National Identity* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988).

<sup>59</sup> When Claire Nelson and I became acquainted, we realized that both of our projects contained sections on changing myths of origin for Scottish music, conceived separately. Despite this coincidence, we have different focuses in these sections, so they ought to remain complementary (see "Scotland in London's Musical Life," 74–89).

The most infamous tradition of attribution in the history of musical Scotland seems to have begun with William Thomson's 1725 collection *Orpheus Caledonius*. Thomson was a Scottish singer who went south to London and made a career performing "Scotch songs" there. His 1725 collection was the first large-scale publication of Scottish songs containing both music and words. In it, Thomson attributed seven of the songs to David Rizzio, who had been secretary to Mary Queen of Scots.<sup>60</sup> (A lutenist and probably violinist, Rizzio was brutally murdered on suspicion of being Mary's paramour in 1566, by a group organized by her husband, Lord Darnley.) Thomson's ascriptions were not attacked at the time, in fact they caught on: a few years after Thomson, other Scottish tunes were ascribed to Rizzio in two new London collections.<sup>61</sup> Then, in 1742 or 1743, James Oswald published his *Second Collection of Curious Scots Tunes*,<sup>62</sup> attaching the name David Rizo to six of them, and the backlash began. Months earlier, in 1741, the *Scots Magazine* had printed a poetic "Epistle to James Oswald" mourning his departure from Edinburgh for London. The poem, possibly by the ubiquitous Allan Ramsay,<sup>63</sup> included the lines "When wilt thou teach our soft *Aeidian* fair / To languish at a false Sicilian Air; / Or when some tender tune compose again, / And cheat the town wi' *David Rizo's* name?"<sup>64</sup> Was this implication of deceit tongue-in-cheek? An in-joke? Though Oswald may have invoked Rizzio's name among friends, I can find no evidence that he had yet used Rizzio's name in print;<sup>65</sup> the "Epistle" may even have given him the idea to do so the next year. In any case, over the next decades, ambiguous insinuations about Oswald's ascriptions would turn to open vilification. Oswald was

<sup>60</sup> The attributions are in the index, which reads: "The Songs mark'd thus (\*) were composed by David Rezzio." Note that it is not entirely clear whether Thomson meant the words, the music, or both, since "songs" usually referred only to the former.

<sup>61</sup> *The Musical Miscellany: Being a Collection of Choice Songs Set to the Violin and Flute by the Most Eminent Masters*, 6 vols. (London: John Watts, 1729–31); and the fourth volume of *The Merry Musician: or, a Cure for the Spleen: Being a Collection of the Most Diverting Songs, and Pleasant Ballads, set to the Violin or Flute adapted to every Taste & Humour* (London: John Walsh, c. 1733 [the first volume had appeared in 1716]); only the tune of one song is attributed to Rizzio here: "Pinkie House," 4: 131. In vol. 2 (c. 1728), Walsh appears to have copied ornament for ornament and word for word the song "The Bush aboon Traquair" from the 1725 edition of *Orpheus Caledonius*; but although this is one of the tunes Thomson had there attributed to Rizzio, the song bears no attribution in the Walsh collection (see 2: 166–7).

<sup>62</sup> London: J. Simpson.

<sup>63</sup> See Burns Martin, *Bibliography of Allan Ramsay* (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie and Company, 1931), 52.

<sup>64</sup> *Scots Magazine*, October 1741, 455.

<sup>65</sup> By virtue of being published only after Oswald went to London, the *Second Collection*, at least in any extant form, cannot have predated the "Epistle."



accused either of passing his own tunes off as those of Rizzio, or of trying to sell his publications through sensationalism.<sup>66</sup>

Something about the ascriptions to Rizzio made them highly volatile, despite the fact that they were fundamentally no different from so many other ascriptions at the time. Rizzio filled perfectly the role of symbolic author. Back when William Thomson first began the print tradition of ascribing tunes to Rizzio, he might have been passing on attributions he had heard orally; or possibly he chose to tack on the name himself. In either case, surrounded by the Italian-dominated fashionable music scene of 1725 London, Thomson must have thought that an Italian name would bring some special status to the tunes it graced. Rizzio was a brilliant choice: a famous name connected to a famous event – recognizably Italian, even associated with royalty; and to boot he was a musician and known to have spent time in Scotland in the murky past. The attribution of these tunes to Rizzio was in any case no more or less likely or “true” than so many other names attached to tunes. The problem was that the name worked too well – and just at the moment when many Scots (and many English people) were trying to assert a new independence from Italian culture. Thomson removed Rizzio’s name from his expanded 1733 edition, perhaps because of the general surge of anti-Italianism surrounding the success of *The Beggar’s Opera* in the interim.

But Oswald was less wise than Thomson: by the time he printed several songs under the name “Rizo” in the early 1740s (not the same songs that Thomson had credited to Rizzio), it is fair to accuse him, not of dishonesty or sensationalism, but of making an ill-informed decision. His use of the Italian name at this point was somewhat analogous to, though much less physically dangerous than, flaunting a royal privilege in France during the reign of terror. Oswald published his collection in London, but he must have been aware of the tone of the “Epistle”; perhaps he did not realize how eager the Scots had become at this point to claim whatever cultural property they could.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> For details and accounts of the Rizzio attributions and the reaction to them, see John Glen, *Early Scottish Melodies: Including Examples from Manuscripts and Early Printed Works, Along with a Number of Comparative Tunes, Notes on Former Annotators, English and Other Claims, and Biographical Notices, etc.* (Edinburgh: J. and R. Glen, 1900), 248–52; Fiske, *Scotland in Music*, 17–18, 21–2; Henry George Farmer, *A History of Music in Scotland* (London: Hinrichsen Edition, 1947), 252.

<sup>67</sup> No one seemed to object to Oswald’s various other pseudonyms, even other Italian ones, such as Dottel Figlio, probably because the works he attributed to those names were not as important as national property. Oswald’s predilection for musical pseudonyms is interesting in the light of Kenneth Simpson’s study of analogous situations in Scottish poetry and prose at this time. Simpson argues that Scottish national insecurity was often reflected in the creation of multiple authorial personae by Scottish authors. See Simpson, *The Protean Scot: The Crisis of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Scottish Literature* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988).

There was now an ever-present nationalist tension to the musical scene in Edinburgh. By mid-century, there were numerous Italians in Edinburgh making money from Scottish music as performers or composers, most prominently Nicolò Pasquali, Giusto Tenducci, and Francesco Barsanti, who sought to combine their Italian training with bows to the increasing demands for Scottish melodies and sounds. Francesco Geminiani, who spent much time in London and Dublin, but only passed through Edinburgh,<sup>68</sup> perhaps had less commercial reason to engage the Scottish repertoire than those resident in Scotland. That he chose to work only with Scottish melodies in his *Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick* (London, 1749) shows that he was really attracted to the repertoire, but it is quite likely that it was the Rizzio myth itself that first drew him in. In his Preface, he wrote:

Two composers of Music have appear'd in the World, who in their different kinds of Melody, have rais'd my Admiration; namely *David Rizzio* and *Gio. Baptista Lulli*; of these which stands highest in Reputation, or deserves to stand highest, is none of my business to pronounce: But when I consider, that Rizzio was foremost in point of Time, that till then Melody was intirely rude and barbarous, and that he found Means at once to civilize and inspire it with all the native Gallantry of the SCOTISH [*sic*] Nation, I am inclined to give him the preference.<sup>69</sup>

As a symbolic author, Rizzio certainly must have appealed to the expatriate Italian. Roger Fiske aptly points out that both Lully and Rizzio were also Italian expatriates – and the idea that the beauty of Scottish music might be attributable to an Italian must have been irresistible.<sup>70</sup> For exactly the same reasons that it appealed to Geminiani himself, however, the Rizzio legend was now offensive to many Scots.<sup>71</sup> By 1772, when the poet Robert Fergusson wrote his “Elegy on the Death of Scots Music,” we can see here how much music had become linked to national pride:

Now foreign sonnets bear the gree [prize],  
And crabbit queer variety  
Of sound fresh sprung frae *Italy*,  
A bastard breed!

<sup>68</sup> That Geminiani was in fact in Edinburgh has been established using records of the Edinburgh Musical Society by Sonia Tinagli Baxter, in “Italian Music and Musicians in Edinburgh, c. 1720–1800: A Historical and Critical Study,” 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of Glasgow, 1999), 1: 48.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Fiske, *Scotland in Music*, 21. <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>71</sup> And has remained so: see John Purser’s tone in his discussion of this attribution (Purser, *Scotland’s Music: A History of Traditional and Classical Music of Scotland from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* [Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1992], 179). For an eighteenth-century dismissal along similar lines, see the sixth edition of John Gregory, *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World*, 2 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1774), 2: 33–4n.

Unlike that saft-tongu'd melody  
Which now lies dead.<sup>72</sup>

Fergusson's disdain for "foreign" sonnets disregards the previously reigning ideas of genre and function, showing instead the new obsession with national *origin* as pedigree – to make music cultural capital.

Unsurprisingly, as outcry against Italian influence in all corners rose in hue in the 1770s, there was finally a strong counterclaim on the creative origins of the Scots tunes. It was no longer good enough just to hint that Oswald might have composed some songs himself and attributed them to Rizzio, because Geminiani had basically implied that Rizzio had written not only a few airs, but was responsible for the Scottish musical character. A new symbolic author had to be found – a Scot. The Scottish philosopher Lord Kames published in his 1774 *Sketches of the History of Man* a rebuttal of the Rizzio claims, using a quote from the early seventeenth-century Italian Alessandro Tassoni. Tassoni had said of James I of Scotland (r. 1406–1437) that he "not only composed sacred poems set to music, but also of himself invented a new, melancholy, and plaintive kind of music, different from all other. In which he was imitated by Carlo Gesualdo, prince of Venosa."<sup>73</sup> This, Kames says, must refer to no other music than the well-known Scottish songs, which had previously been ascribed to Rizzio.<sup>74</sup> Around the same time or just thereafter appeared the fourth volume of the Englishman Sir John Hawkins's *General History of Music*, which reiterated Kames's transfer of symbolic authorship somewhat more emphatically. At the start of the volume, Hawkins wonders why Flemish, Italian, German, French, and English music all sounded the same in the Renaissance; and only Scottish and Irish music were distinguished, especially the former. In the new climate of national awareness, it is to the question of origins that Hawkins turned for an explanation. Because the Scottish style was "truly original,"<sup>75</sup> "we are driven to seek the *origin* of this kind of music elsewhere than in the writings of those authors who have treated the subject [of music during this period] in general terms" (1, emphasis mine). Hawkins

<sup>72</sup> From the *Weekly Magazine*, 5 March 1772. Reprinted in Robert Fergusson, *Scots Poems* (Edinburgh: Porpoise Press, 1925), 18–20. Johnson quotes this stanza (*Music and Society*, 193) and frames it as an attack on "classical" music for having choked "folk music" to death, though I see here only national characterizations, and not yet the full connotations of "folk" and "classical."

<sup>73</sup> In *Pensieri Diversi*, book X, ch. 23. Quoted in Italian in Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man* (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1774), 1: 166–7. The translation is from John Hawkins, *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (London: T. Payne and Son, 1769–76), 4: 5.

<sup>74</sup> Kames, *Sketches*, 1: 167.

<sup>75</sup> Hawkins, *General History*, 4: 4. Parenthetical citations in the rest of this paragraph refer to this volume.

first dismisses the “common opinion” that “David Ricci or Rizzio” improved Scottish music to give it its current sound (1–2). This opinion, he says, has “nothing to support it but vulgar tradition”; Hawkins claims Rizzio would have been far too busy in his post, and in any case, he could not have undertaken the “reformation or improvement of the Scots music” within the two short years he was in the country:

In fact, the origin of those melodies, which are the subject of the present enquiry, is to be derived from a higher source; and so far is it from being true, that the Scots music has been meliorated by the Italian, that the converse of the proposition may be assumed; and, however strange it may seem, an Italian writer of great reputation and authority has not hesitated to assert that some of the finest vocal music that his country can boast of, owes its merit in a great measure to its affinity with the Scots. (3)

And Hawkins cites Tassoni, now in English translation (5). Thus did the British turn the tables on Italy.

As the symbolic originator of the Scottish musical character, James I was a coup for the Scots. He had been “certified” by two foreigners – first Tassoni (ironically, an Italian) and then Hawkins. Now it was left for a Scottish writer to expand on the claim at greater length. William Tytler took on this task in his “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” first printed in 1779.<sup>76</sup> Tytler was a protective nationalist: while he did praise the singing of Tenducci and Domenico Corri, and he liked Pergolesi and other Italian composers, he believed that “a Scots song can only be sung in taste by a Scottish voice” (237). With more space to devote to the subject than Hawkins, and more reason to be enthusiastic, Tytler waxes rhapsodic, brushing aside the “vulgar conjecture” (196) that Rizzio had written this music, and concluding, “I hope we shall no longer hear the

<sup>76</sup> This essay first appeared in Hugo Arnot, *The History of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1779), 624–42. The version cited here (including parenthetical citations in this paragraph) appeared in *Poetical Remains of James I* (Edinburgh: J. and E. Balfour, 1783), 193–246. There are several small changes and additions between the texts. Claire Nelson believes that the essay may in fact be by Arnot, having found a manuscript version in what appears to be Arnot’s hand (personal communication). But I will continue to refer to the author as Tytler, since it is conventional to do so. Tytler cites Hawkins, but gives credit for discovering the relevant passage of Tassoni to the Scot Patrick Murray, Lord Elibank, some twenty years earlier. He calls Lord Elibank the “restorer of this record . . . who . . . deserves the thanks of every Scotsman.” It was Elibank “from whom I [Tytler] had a copy of that passage, since published by Sir John Hawkins” (see Tytler, “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 204–5, esp. footnotes). Though he did not publish on music, Elibank was an erudite scholar, a lawyer and close friend of David Hume and Lord Kames; Kames too must have obtained the Tassoni citation from him. The Scottish philosopher James Beattie provides another early notice of the Tassoni attribution, probably also received through contact with Elibank. Beattie discusses Tassoni in a 1762 essay, not published until 1776; the essay will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

absurd tale, that the Scottish music was either invented or improved by an *Italian*, when we see it proved, by so great an authority as *Tassoni* that it was rather the other way around (217, italics in original).<sup>77</sup> He calls James “the father of the Scottish music, so distinguished from every other country” (229).<sup>78</sup>

The reign of James I was cut short by his brutal murder in 1437, and his reign as symbolic creator of the Scottish musical tradition also ended in an untimely fashion – despite his ideally suited résumé. Newer ideas of authorship would soon displace him, as creativity came to be seen as a more internal, human act, and the role of the abstracted, symbolic author vanished. We will track further developments in the origin myths for Scottish music over the coming chapters. James I, though, stood as the apogee of the older ideas of authorship, but now incorporating national consciousness. Scholars in this century have enjoyed repeatedly debunking both the Rizzio and James I myths – and it certainly is easy to debunk them, and fun to laugh at assertions such as Geminiani’s. Yet these claims are best regarded not simply as factual errors waiting to be corrected, but as documents of their times. Each story made sense when it appeared; and, taken together, the changing mythology reflects the tightening boundaries circumscribing musical categories across the eighteenth century, as creative origins became increasingly vital to musical understanding, and increasingly politicized.

<sup>77</sup> Tytler has just detailed (“Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 206–16) how James had brought melody to Italian music [!], which had heretofore only known musty scientific harmony.

<sup>78</sup> There were other less widespread theories suggesting symbolic individual origins for Scottish music. Various theories are considered in Charles Dibdin’s “Lectures on Music” (London, British Library, Add. MS 30968, esp. ff. 34r–37r), and Dibdin tentatively looks past them, but without suggesting an alternative (see f. 36v). On Dibdin, see Claire Nelson’s discussion in “Scotland in London’s Musical Life,” 85–7.

## 2

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### From pastoral to picturesque: nature, art, and genre in the later eighteenth century

*The principle of “imitating” or “following” or “keeping close to nature” was primarily the maxim of neo-classicism; but it was also fatal to that creed, since nearly all forms of the revolt against neo-classical standards invoked the same catchword. The justification of new tendencies by the old rule was made possible partly by the substitution (conscious or unconscious) of other meanings of the multi-vocal terms “nature” and “natural,” partly by the emergence of latent logical implications of certain already accepted neo-classical senses of the formula.<sup>1</sup>*

If the new attention to creative origins brought about by cultural nationalism was a necessary prologue to the ideas of “folk music” and “art music,” a deeper foundation for the new categories began with the redefinitions of “nature” in the later eighteenth century. The words “nature” or “natural” lurk around every corner of eighteenth-century musical discourse, yet between 1720 and 1790 the connotations of these words for writers on music – even writers in the same geographical location – shifted radically. Scottish music was already linked especially closely with the idea of “nature” at the turn of the eighteenth century, and events in the 1760s thrust the country into an even greater association with the natural. As nature changed meanings, so did Scottish music. Whereas at the start of the century its “natural” qualities had little to do with “folkishness,” by the end of the century newer ideas of “nature” had rendered “Scottish music” essentially synonymous in European minds with the modern category of “folk music.”

Back during the vogue for “Scotch Songs,” when John Dryden had commented in his Preface to *Fables Ancient and Modern* (1700) that these

<sup>1</sup> Arthur O. Lovejoy, “‘Nature’ as Aesthetic Norm” (first published in 1927), reprinted in Lovejoy, *Essays in the History of Ideas* (New York: Capricorn/G. S. Putnam’s Sons, 1960), 76.

"Scotch tunes" were like Chaucer in that they had a certain "rude sweetness ... natural ... though not perfect," "nature" was still primarily an issue encapsulated in thought about generic convention (function) rather than ethnic provenance or creative inspiration (origin); and Dryden's generation saw nature mediated into music primarily through conventional rules. We can see this by considering the relationship of "nature" to two other words that linger nearby in aesthetic discussions of the time: "science" and "art" (or "artifice"). During the seventeenth century and for much of the eighteenth, art and science were largely synonymous when applied to music. Neither was a direct antonym of nature; rather, both were seen largely as *extensions* of nature. The well-established mimetic paradigm for the fine arts demanded that nature serve both as the model and the ideal. At the same time, music, as a human endeavor and a representation of civilization and achievement, was an applied craft; it required studied rules ("art" or "science") to achieve its imitative potential and to dress its allotted portion of "nature" appropriately. Alexander Pope told humanity that "All nature is but art unknown to thee."<sup>2</sup> This "art" was always based on rules found in nature herself, and the close association between nature and generic convention was apparent when Pope laid down his creed thus:

First follow NATURE, and your Judgment frame  
By her just Standard, which is still the same ...  
Life, Force, and Beauty, must to all impart,  
At once the *Source*, and *End*, and *Test* of Art ...  
Those RULES of old *discover'd*, not *devis'd*,  
Are *Nature* still, but *Nature Methodiz'd*;  
*Nature*, like *Liberty*, is but restrain'd  
By the same Laws which first *herself* ordain'd ...  
Learn hence for Ancient *Rules* a just Esteem;  
To copy *Nature* is to copy *Them*.<sup>3</sup>

This is the context in which we should read Dryden's use of the word "natural," and even many later uses – for Pope's aesthetic stance, though pithily presented, was a summary of long-established thought, and it continued to be echoed for much of the century.

Nature's presence as rules – rules extended and refined by art and science – was, however, increasingly challenged by other ways of thinking after 1750. Around 1760, John Gregory, an Aberdonian professor of medicine, began to give in Edinburgh a series of lectures, later published as *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the*

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Pope, "Essay on Man," Epistle I: X, line 289 (see *The Works of Alexander Pope* [Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1995], 198).

<sup>3</sup> Pope, "An Essay on Criticism," I, lines 68–9, 72–3, 88–91, 139–40 (see *Works*, 68–70). The capitalization and italics here are from the Twickenham Edition of Pope's Poems, general ed. John Butt (London: Methuen, 1961), 1: 46–55.



*Animal World*.<sup>4</sup> Gregory began with a premise not unlike Pope's, even if the lines between "nature" and "art" had become much less magically fluid: "Nature gives only the seeds of Taste, culture must rear them, or they will never become a source of pleasure."<sup>5</sup> But Gregory also had a new, post-Rousseau agenda: his vision of "art" required new constraints, for though this art might still act as a friendly extension of nature, it could also be a potentially dangerous byproduct of civilization and progress. Art tended towards decadence unless carefully reined in, and "nature" had to be rediscovered where art had obscured it. Gregory's treatise will steer this chapter, providing an example of the confusion that befell the concept of "nature" around 1760, ultimately leading to the overthrow from within that my epigraph from Arthur O. Lovejoy observes. Eventually, civilization (and art and science) became opposites of nature rather than extensions thereof.

### **Nature as genre: the pastoral and the Scottish before 1760**

I begin, however, with a closer look at what "nature" had implied before, in order that the word's subtle morphing in works such as Gregory's makes sense in context.

The relationship of nature to generic codes in Dryden's and Pope's time actually straddled two levels, for though the "outer" codes (formal conventions, appropriate style, etc.) of *every* genre were perceived in an abstract sense to be naturally determined, there was also one particular generic domain whose "inner" attributes (subject matter and goals) addressed nature, and humanity's relationship to nature: the pastoral. The pastoral thus stands as the ultimate embodiment of "nature" in a genre-dominated artistic world.

Strictly speaking, as Paul Alpers has clarified in his recent book *What is Pastoral?*, pastoral, being a "mode," is more a group of related genres than a single bounded genre.<sup>6</sup> Still, for centuries the component genres of pastoral shared not only their emphasis on humanity's place in nature, but also their perspective from *within* the natural world at hand: that is, rather than commenting on "nature" as outside observers, authors writing pastorals spoke in "natural" guise themselves to show how human lives and deaths, loves and losses, make us all essentially a part of nature.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, pastoral's different manifestations shared many "outer" conventions as well, such as their tendency to focus on a

<sup>4</sup> 2nd edn (London: J. Dodsley, 1766).

<sup>5</sup> Gregory, *A Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 74.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), ch. 2, esp. 44–50.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 52–3, 62–4, 91–3, 162.



stock Arcadian world as representative of the universal human condition they addressed. The values of literary pastoral transferred easily to music – especially in the eighteenth century, when music and poetry were considered the most kindred of arts.<sup>8</sup> In musical versions of pastoral, from Christmas pastorals to the looser appearances of *musettes*, *sicilianas*, and *pastorales* as parts of peasant subplots in opera and ballet, the “outer” conventions – “peasant” rhythmic topoi, bagpipe drones, parallel thirds, and in staged works the stylized costumes as well – had long been turned to the same “inner” ends as in literary versions of pastoral.

At the root of both poetic and musical pastoral lay the desire to treat humanity’s general place in nature by examining humans in their “simplest” state. “Simple” here does not necessarily imply “primitive”; this connotation would accrue only during the later eighteenth century. Rather, as a rule, “simple” here indicates what is most idealized, least encumbered by corollaries, and thus most heuristically elegant.<sup>9</sup> Pastoral allegory used this simple state as an illustrative model to treat the human condition in general. In his famous study *Some Versions of Pastoral*, William Empson sees the pastoral as “putting the complex into the simple”; it was a way of teaching literate courtiers and their like about themselves by presenting shepherds or their like.<sup>10</sup> Because of its universalized approach to humanity’s place in nature, some poetic and musical forms not specifically considered pastoral could approach it quite closely. In music, the *galant* style in general shared many of the stylistic markers associated with pastoral, as well as a similar attitude toward nature as simple, universal moral balance. (Indeed, the pastoral and *galant* style sometimes appear almost coextensive in the eighteenth century.) But whether poetic or musical, and whether specifically marked or more generally implied, pastoral was a leveler: it stripped off the veneer to show how all humans really are or should be as part of nature.

This leveling effect can unify otherwise diverse examples, for of course pastoral varied significantly in different times, places, and

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed consideration of musical and operatic versions of pastoral traditions in different parts of Europe from the late sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries, see Ellen T. Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Traditions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980); Hermann Jung, *Die Pastoral: Studien zur Geschichte eines musikalischen Topos* (Bern and Munich: Francke Verlag, 1980); and Peter Schleuning, *Die Sprache der Natur: Natur in der Musik des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> See Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 40.

<sup>10</sup> William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, new edn (New York: New Directions, 1974 [1st edn published 1935]), 22. Empson expands: “pastoral usually works like that; it describes the lives of ‘simple’ low people to an audience of refined wealthy people, so as to make them think first ‘this is true about everyone’ and then ‘this is true about us’” (195–6). “It is this clash and identification of the refined, the universal, and the low that is the whole point of pastoral” (249).

sub-genres. (For example, courtly love plays a central role in Renaissance pastoral, while the issues of friendship or death and mourning had higher profiles in antiquity.) In all cases, though, there is a sense that the pastoral is a sort of mirror image of the heroic. Its characters are low-born stock types, but the lessons they learn are almost always the life lessons considered "universal" at the time. As moral tales, pastorals tended to reflect directly back onto the "high" heroic genres of their times, creating a closed circle of human life. (This explains both the regular presence of "pastoral" episodes within heroic works, and the frequency of plot devices that bring noble and pastoral characters together, either through contact or by revealing the "low" characters to be "high" characters in disguise.) There was a strain of pastoral that dealt with the "rustic" too – often it was a satirical strain, in which the comic rustic figures served to show up universal human folly.<sup>11</sup> (In these forms the pastoral was sometimes considered the "low" representative of the *genera dicendi*.<sup>12</sup>) But even here the leveling effect remains: if the spirit of the work is to be considered pastoral, then even if that work at first seems to mock, its ultimate purpose must be to mock all of humanity, to suggest deeper connections and moral or allegorical truths about us as an integral part of nature.

When "rustic" or "crude" figures are truly set apart – as "unnatural" or abhorrent – they no longer seem to be operating within the realm of pastoral. We can see this specifically in pre-1700 accounts of Scottish music. "Scotch" or "northern" had been near-synonyms for "uncouth," "rustic," or "rural" in the context of English broadside ballads and other writings since Elizabethan times, but these attributes had not been linked to "nature" as such. For example, the Englishman Thomas Kirke, in a generally unsympathetic 1679 account of Scotland, comes to the subject of music as follows: "Music they have, but not the harmony of the sphears, but loud terrene noises, like the bellowing of beasts; the loud bagpipe is their chief delight, stringed instruments are too soft to penetrate the organs of their ears, that are only pleased with sounds of substance."<sup>13</sup> In this politically loaded view of the country (a representation that ignored the harp tradition, for example, in order to paint a picture of brash crudeness), Scottish music was barbaric by virtue of its sheer volume, which implied a lack of subtlety. However, such rusticity and barbarism were not "natural." Just the opposite: they were considered abhorrent disfigurements of the "natural" course God had planned for humanity. Disdaining Scottish music as "not the harmony

<sup>11</sup> See Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Traditions*, 13, for one formulation of this set of possibilities.

<sup>12</sup> Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 9.

<sup>13</sup> Kirke, *A Modern Account of Scotland by an English Gentleman*, quoted in P. Hume Brown, ed., *Early Travellers in Scotland* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1891), 264.

of the spears" is dismissing it quite specifically as *unnatural*. Kirke's Scottish music has little to do with pastoral because it has little to do with the concept of nature in general – or at least humanity's shared place in nature.

When, shortly afterward – during the vogue for "Scotch songs" which swept through England from the end of the seventeenth century, and then reverberated back in Scotland – "nature" *did* come, for Dryden and others, to be seen as an attribute of Scottish music, it was, unsurprisingly, stylized through pastoral convention. In England, the so-called "Scotch songs," whether they were really of Scottish origin or faked by English theater composers, as many were, came to be taken as lessons in simplicity and moral attitudes, or as pastoral satire. When Scots began to publish these songs, they had the same focus (though, with their own dignity at stake, the moral aspect was obviously stressed and the pastoral satire much rarer). The poetic introduction to William Thomson's 1725 collection *Orpheus Caledonius* announces pastoral in the most conventional and strictest sense:

You BEAUS and BELLES so fine and fair,  
Here learn to love, and be sincere;  
True Passion Nature still imparts,  
Nor values Bodies without Hearts . . .  
Love's brightest Flames warm *Scottish* Lads,  
Tho' coolly clad in High-land Plads;  
They scorn brocade, who like the Lass,  
Nor need a Carpet, if there's Grass;  
With Pipe and Glee each Hill resounds,  
And Love that gives, can heal their Wounds . . .<sup>14</sup>

The Scotch songs and their characters, wearing the stereotypical plaid (the collection was published primarily for a London public although Thomson was Scottish), can morally instruct the "beaus" and "belles" of the town why their "Wit's a Fool, when Nature will."<sup>15</sup> The texts of the songs in the collection, many stolen from Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, are populated by a familiar cast of Arcadian characters: "nymphs," "Swains," "Cloris," "Strephon," and "Pan" with his "aiten Reed." Even in the songs featuring more characteristically Scottish names and landscapes, the lives of herdspeople is implied, and sometimes central.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Orpheus Caledonius* (London: printed for the author, 1725; rev. edn 1733), prefatory pages 1–2 in the 1725 edn, unnumbered prefatory pages in the 1733 edn.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Kirsteen McCue has also discussed pastoral elements in the poetic texts of Scottish songs. See McCue, "George Thomson (1757–1851): His Collections of National Airs in their Scottish Cultural Context," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1993), 1: 161–6. I want here to extend consideration of the pastoral beyond specific song texts, though,

Predictably, the music set to the pastoral poetry in Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius* reflects these values through typically pastoral and *galant* features. The melodies are given with few ornaments, and accompanied with simple bass lines. (The 1733 edition would in fact reduce ornamentation and bass movement further.) To the extent that Dryden's "rude sweetness" was part of this image of the Scotch song repertoire, it was not the Ossianic primitivism of later in the century, but a "scorn [for] brocade" and its metaphorical equivalents, revealing the simple truths underneath. Thomson and his contemporaries saw "nature" in Scottish songs – both the poetic and musical aspects – within the pastoral framework.

The same year that *Orpheus Caledonius* appeared, Allan Ramsay presented the world with his own full-length "Scots Pastoral," *The Gentle Shepherd* (though the work grew out of two shorter stylized pieces Ramsay had written). Ramsay had no trouble mixing his "improving" urges toward his uneducated brethren with his pastoral ideal. In the play, Ramsay takes up the current issue of rural superstition, gently implying that rustic credulity (and persecution of witches) might be cured with education.<sup>17</sup> Despite his apparent compromise of pastoral's proposition that shepherds are fundamentally the same as lords, Ramsay redeems the essential nobility of the shepherds in the play through a series of familiar plot devices (revealed "High" births, encounters between the shepherds and their lord, etc.). Additionally, Ramsay countered his hints about current problems of class by suspending his work in a "timeless" setting; the "time of action" is given only as "within twenty hours." In other words, Ramsay was still very concerned with generic precedent and integrity (his work is peppered with references to the pastoral writing of Tasso, Guarini, and Spenser among others), but he found a way to transfer Arcadia to Scotland – following the new association that was being formed between pastoral qualities and his native country.

The Scottish Arcadia in Ramsay's "Scottish Pastoral" had musical parallels as well, for example in the works of James Oswald. Many of Oswald's works or movements bear the labels "pastoral," or related tags such as "musette" and "siciliana." For Oswald (like McGibbon and other Scottish contemporaries), pastoral generally drew on continental traditions – because the established "pastoral" genres of instrumental music came from France and Italy. Thus, most of the movements in Oswald's *Six Pastoral Solos* for violin, cello and figured bass, for

to include the cognitive framework in which the music was contextualized (for example the quote at the opening of *Orpheus Caledonius*).

<sup>17</sup> See A. M. Kinghorn, "Biographical and Critical Introduction," in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, 4: 94–100.

example, have an Italian flavor. Yet there are some, such as the “musette” from Sonata No. 1, that incorporate gapped scalar runs and rhythmic snaps (see Example 1). The latter feature was already recognized abroad as “Scottish,” and the former would come to be by the 1760s, though it probably characterized much Scottish music for centuries before this. In other words, Oswald had no qualms about clothing some “pastoral” movements in melodic idioms he associated with his own country – just as Ramsay had done with words. Still, as with Ramsay, the local color does not obscure the fact that Oswald’s movement remains within the conventions of the governing genre: in this case sonata-suites using the typical *galant* harmonic vocabulary. The use of Scottish sounds is analogous to Ramsay putting Scottish character names into a pastoral that he still saw as drawing on the traditions of the Italian Guarini and others. (Note that in Ramsay’s “To the Music Club,” cited in Chapter 1, Ramsay had implied that Scottish music could rival Italian in pastoral quality as well, so Oswald may even have taken his cue from Ramsay.<sup>18</sup>)

Example 1: “Musette” from James Oswald, *Six Pastoral Solos for a Violin and Violoncello*, No. 1 (c. 1745).



It is notable too, since the Highlands would afterward come to be seen as the ultimate locus of the natural (in the later sense as opposed to civilization), that as a native Scot, Oswald still did not consider Highland music to be any more “natural” than Lowland. His attempts at

<sup>18</sup> The same is true for the composer’s contemporaries, such as Alexander Munro, whose 1732 *Collection of the Best Scots Tunes* (Paris, 1732) transformed them into *galant*-style suites. Implicit is the idea that melodies such as “Corn Riggs” or “Tweedside” were appropriate for this generic treatment.

"Highland" music in the 1740s and 1750s are among the most carefully formed presentations in his collections. Constructed in imitation of pibrochs, they build from small repetitive melodic cells through ornamented variations and are then rounded to return to the beginning.<sup>19</sup> Oswald clearly recognized Highland music as a geographical style with rules of melody and form, just as, for example, he recognized French music in similar terms (his imitations of French dances tend to be much more chromatic, after Rameau, than his pieces in "Italian" dance genres). But Oswald's Highland style had little to do with "nature" as yet. It is in fact the Lowland melodies, linked to the pastoral "Scotch song" texts such as those in *Orpheus Caledonius*, that seem to have represented nature most for Oswald.

Historically the pastoral mode has had its highest profile when the arts have been conceived primarily as morally instructive activities: in classical antiquity, during the later Renaissance, and through much of the Enlightenment period. Just as stripped-down terms work best for mathematical proof, and stripped-down conditions work best for controlling a scientific experiment, stripped-down (i.e. "simple") human models in poetry and music might offer the greatest insights and instruction into the human condition and its moral quandaries. Such models and values could even offer the arts in general – as edifices built upon that world of nature – a sense of dignity and balance. But the careful concern with generic "rules" would not outlast Ramsay or Oswald by very many years. If *The Beggar's Opera* had already in some ways turned pastoral on its head, by replacing the usual "low" shepherd figures with criminals as representatives of all humanity,<sup>20</sup> still Gay had preserved a strong background in the "inner" and "outer"

<sup>19</sup> See for example "A Highland Battle," in *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, final reprint edition of all twelve volumes in two (London: Straight and Skillern, [n.d.]), 2: 68–9. Other examples printed in the collection include: "Marsail Lochinalie" (2: 124, bearing a similar instruction to that in other "Highland" pieces in the collection: "To be begun slow and increase in quickness to the last part but one, as the tune represents a Battle." This piece has a bagpipe range and tuning, except some G<sup>♯</sup>s). See also "Pioberachd Mhic Dhonuill" (2: 152), and "Hi ri ri ri ho" (2: 155).

<sup>20</sup> Gay appears to have been inspired to write the piece by a suggestion in a 1716 letter from Swift to Pope: "There is a young ingenious Quaker in this town who writes verses to his mistress, not very correct, but in a strain purely what a poetical Quaker should do, commending her look and habit, etc. It gave me the hint that a set of Quaker pastorals might succeed if our friend Gay would fancy it . . . I believe farther, the pastoral ridicule is not exhausted, and that a porter, footman, or chairman's pastoral might do well. Or what do you think of a Newgate pastoral, among the whores and thieves there?" (Quoted in William Eben Schultz, *Gay's Beggar's Opera: Its Content, History, and Influence* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923], 122.) While remaining sensitive to pastoral conventions, Gay's iconoclastic work takes up this cynical twist on the depiction of the complex through the simple by suggesting that contemporary lords and politicians might be represented on stage by thieves and whores – rather than Arcadian figures (see Empson, *Pastoral*, 195–250).



conventions of the pastoral genres. (Ramsay even turned his own *Gentle Shepherd* into a ballad opera in imitation of Gay.<sup>21</sup>) Later in the century would come a more significant challenge to the traditional pastoral – a challenge that would amount to a breakdown of the “outer” elements of the mode, alongside the breakdown of the importance of “outer” generic conventions in general. The “inner” aspects of pastoral, meanwhile, would be fundamentally altered as well, as “nature” changed meanings.

### **Nature versus civilization: universalism and progress**

In 1762, Francis Peacock wrote in the Preface to his *Fifty Favourite Scottish Airs*:

No species of Pastoral Music is more distinguished by the applause and admiration of all good Judges, than the Songs of DAVID RIZZIO. We cannot indeed, with certainty, distinguish His compositions from those of his Imitators; nor can we determine, whether He formed the musical taste of the *Scots*, or only adapted himself to the national taste established before his time: but if we may believe tradition, it is to him that the *Scots* are indebted for many of their finest Airs; and custom has now affixed his name to this particular Mode of Musical Composition.<sup>22</sup>

For Peacock, the Scottish style was still a “mode” of musical composition; and, as his first sentence makes clear, its defining characteristic was its pastoral element. Perhaps that is why Peacock was by 1762 one of the rare writing Scots who did not reject the Rizzio myth outright: the legend fitted into a view of function, genre, and nature that he carried on, even as it was beginning to die out around him.

John Gregory, the Aberdonian medical professor, had other ideas. To understand why Gregory took a very different view from his contemporary Peacock, it is important to realize how different the framework was within which he considered music. First, the “national” and “natural” were joint motivating issues now:

They who apply much of their time to Music, acquire new Tastes, besides their national one, and in the infinite variety which melody and harmony are capable of, discover new sources of pleasure formerly unknown to them. But the finest natural Taste never adopts a new one, till the ear has been long accustomed to it,

<sup>21</sup> After a touring company of *The Beggar’s Opera* visited Scotland, Ramsay was asked by pupils at a local school to turn *The Gentle Shepherd* from the original version, which had incorporated four “songs” (one with a tune indicated), into a full-fledged ballad opera (Martin, Allan Ramsay, 81–2).

<sup>22</sup> Francis Peacock, *Fifty Favourite Scottish Airs: For a Violin, German Flute and Violoncello, With a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord* (Aberdeen: Francis Peacock, [1762]), unnumbered prefatory page.

and after all seldom enters into it with that warmth and feeling, which those do, to whom it is national.<sup>23</sup>

Gregory here uses “national” and “natural” virtually interchangeably. Since we have seen how central the nature-nurture question was to the emergence of nationalism, it is predictable that this particular passage comes in the context of an attack on Italian opera, and a claim about the essential Scottishness of Scottish music:

Thus in Scotland there is a species of Music perfectly well fitted to inspire that joyous mirth suited to dancing, and a plaintive Music peculiarly expressive of that tenderness and pleasing melancholy attendant on distress in love; both original in their kind, and different from every other country in Europe. It is of no consequence whence this Music derives its origin, whether it be simple or complex, according to the rules of regular composition, or against them; whilst it produces its intended effect in a superior degree to any other, it is the preferable Music . . .<sup>24</sup>

This is one reason why Gregory takes a different angle on the Rizzio story from Peacock. By the 1774 edition of his very successful book, Gregory was compelled to add a new footnote to the above passage, dismissing the Rizzio ascriptions summarily on the grounds that: “There is a peculiarity in the stile of the Scotch melody, which foreigners, even some of great knowledge in Music, who resided long in Scotland, have often attempted to imitate, but never with success.”<sup>25</sup> The footnote shows that origins *were* important now, despite Gregory’s original statement to the contrary.

However, the implications of the nature-nurture question, and its attendant debate about origins, extended beyond national pride. In Gregory’s text we can see how this same complex of ideas provoked new approaches to learning and the arts in general. Wound into his dismissal of foreign tastes is a broad idea about the “natural” stages of human development – an idea that largely cancels out pastoral as a working framework, replacing it with a new paradigm of “progress.” The concept of human “progress” was itself not recent; in various forms it dated back at least to classical antiquity.<sup>26</sup> But now it was framed in stark and sweeping terms, and its connotations extended considerably. Most of all, its temporal, historical implications were stiffened, leading Gregory and his contemporaries to a self-conscious idea of their place in history. Gregory makes this explicit in the Preface he added to his 1774 edition, in which he discusses at length the “stages of mankind.” In our

<sup>23</sup> Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 91.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 90. <sup>25</sup> Gregory, *Comparative View*, 6th edn (1774), 2: 33n.

<sup>26</sup> See Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965 [originally published Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935]).



most savage state, he asserts, we are worse off than the animals, and from here he lays out a linear pattern for human development. Gregory's ideal state, though, comes much nearer the beginning of his timeline than the end. It is a phase in which people still have their full "bodily powers and all the animal functions in their full vigour. They are bold, active, steady, ardent in the love of liberty and their native country"; nature "shoots wild and free" in this stage, tempered but not yet drowned.<sup>27</sup> Wants are still simple; and, most importantly for the arts, people have yet to lose their wonder and their sense of the sublime. Unfortunately, this ideal state suffers an inevitable decline as power is abused and new pleasures bring corrupt or unattainable desires; eventually the degeneration is even reflected in the human body itself, which becomes more sickly and feeble. As civilization encroaches, Gregory writes: "In matters of taste, the great, the sublime, the pathetic, are first brought to yield to regularity and elegance, and at length are sacrificed to the most childish passion for novelty and the most extravagant caprice."<sup>28</sup>

In light of these reflections on humanity's progress, Gregory's ideas about Rizzio in this new edition of his book do not end with a discussion of national taste. Gregory's nationalism is clearly inseparable from his historical outlook: both are bound up with the question of nature and its relation to "modern" culture – a relationship that seemed antagonistic now. His footnote continues – asserting that even if Rizzio had regularized some of the Scottish airs, this probably did not improve them, "as the wildest of them, which bid defiance to all rules of modern composition, are generally the most powerfully affecting."<sup>29</sup> The suggestions here that "rules" could be antithetical to (wild) nature, could be limiting – and could or even should often be broken – was new to Gregory's generation. As conventions and rules were no longer seen as dictates of nature, the strength of such "outer" generic conventions for modeling art broke down. Genre itself, no longer a natural given, became something to stretch through force of character rather than something to respect inherently. By the end of the century, pronouncements such as Friedrich Schlegel's that "every poem is a genre unto itself"<sup>30</sup> would signal more fully a break with the past, transferring emphasis onto individual works and their genius-creators and away from outer conventions of genre (a thread I will follow up in later chapters).

Alongside this general ebbing of emphasis on outer generic conventions at the end of the eighteenth century,<sup>31</sup> the pastoral's "inner"

<sup>27</sup> Gregory, *Comparative View*, 6th edn (1774), 1: iv–viii. <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, viii, xiv–xvi, xix.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 33–4. Here Gregory was echoing exactly Dr. John Brown (see below, p. 72).

<sup>30</sup> "Eine Gattung für sich" (cited in Duff, *Modern Genre Theory*, 5, and see pp. 3–6).

<sup>31</sup> See also Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J. B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 149; and Dahlhaus, "Was ist eine musikalische Gattung," *NZM* 135 (1974), 622. Jeffrey Kallberg has suggested that Dahlhaus defines

approach to nature – as a leveling force – was altered deeply. Although Gregory's progress was a broad universal concept, his universalism was not the universalism of the traditional pastoral mode. Pastoral had worked on the assumption that humanity was bound together by certain laws that close a circle – ultimately showing an audience's distance from shepherds or their "low" equivalents to be an illusion. When pastoral was situated in a "Golden Age," even a Golden Age that was treated sentimentally, that setting remained something magical – available to those who would enter its sphere temporarily or permanently.<sup>32</sup> On those occasions when the "Golden Age" *did* appear permanently vanished, the implications had generally been religious, but then there was a figurative return promised. That is, in Christianized pastoral, the Garden of Eden was lost to the audience, but inherent in the pastoral imagery was the promise of salvation through the moral principles embodied in simple people, or in the biblical "good shepherd" symbolism.<sup>33</sup> The imagery of the Garden was never separated from the question of how to turn original sin into a working moral framework in its aftermath. Pastoral's universalism, whether pre-Christian or Christian, had thus collapsed both space and time. Eighteenth-century writers began to do just the opposite. Schiller's *Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung* is often invoked as a fundamental explanation of pastoral's relation to its subject matter; but as Alpers shows forcefully (against a more conventional view), it was not a summary of pastoral's *modus operandi*, but a new twist.<sup>34</sup> Schiller, who drew a line between "naïve" poetry (poetry in which the speaker acts as a part of nature), and "sentimental" poetry (in which the poet looks upon nature as something he has lost), believed that only the second

genre too narrowly when he announces its decline in importance around 1800, since Dahlhaus emphasizes the composer's perspective while largely ignoring the aspect of reception – which drives genre in the first place (Kallberg, "The Rhetoric of Genre," 239–42). This is certainly an important point. Because of their centrality to *reception*, generic conventions did retain importance for audiences, and composers, in the nineteenth century. However, the question is again one of degree and emphasis: the focus on the "genius" and the "creative process" in Romantic and modernist views of genre has contributed to the stigmatization of reliance on generic convention since 1800. Dahlhaus's own internalization of these values (as with Benedetto Croce and other twentieth-century theorists of genre) attests to that.

<sup>32</sup> As discussed in a 1659 treatise of René Rapin, the Golden Age represents the "fabulous times" of the past, and must thus be neither too coarse nor too courtly (Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 17–18). This is a Christianization of Greek mythological imagery – the term "Golden Age" after all goes back to Hesiod and before: it relates to a narrative of the Gods' creation and destruction of successive races of men (no women yet), with the ages named after metals in declining order of worth. See Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*, 24–31.

<sup>33</sup> See Renato Poggioli's essay on "The Christian Pastoral," in *The Oaten Flute* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 105–34; see also Alpers's discussion of Spenser (*What is Pastoral?* 174–8).

<sup>34</sup> Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 30–1, 35–7.

was really possible among his contemporaries. Schiller's insistence that the modern poet cannot really remove the distance between himself and the "Golden Age" of "nature" – that this evolved distance itself is the bittersweet marrow of modern existence – was not a part of the long-established pastoral tradition.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, to the extent that the pastoral continued to exist at all, it now had to be integrated into this new framework. So I might go yet further: the perceived distance of the writer on nature from his or her subject, the developed sense of loss and yearning increasingly inevitable in Schiller's time (often adapted from Rousseau), represent as much a dissipation of pastoral's traditional "inner" attitude as an adaptation. Gregory's universalism, like Schiller's a few years later, is not a suspension of space and time, but rather a supreme awareness of spatial and temporal processes.

Instead of being pastoral, then, Gregory's attitude to nature is part of a new secular, historiographical worldview common among his contemporaries. It is telling that Gregory's extensive treatment of musical questions comes not in a book devoted to music, but in *A Comparative View ... of Man with ... The Animal World* – and that Gregory was not himself a musician by trade but a doctor. The Enlightenment's ambitious quest for wide-reaching knowledge extended to seeking a universal view of humanity's place in space and time – in the whole grand plan of existence. To write a "universal history," classifying and comparing humanity in all its carefully defined "stages" and locations became a pet project for eighteenth-century thinkers, from Vico, Turgot, and Condorcet to Herder. Music history was duly brought within the enlarged scope surveyed by general scholars of history and nature, as in Gregory's work. Meanwhile, even studies that purportedly confined themselves to specifically "musical" history attempted a new "universal" outlook, using the same approach from the sciences. In 1769 Sir John Hawkins began his five-volume *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* by staking

<sup>35</sup> See *ibid.*, 28–34, 91–3. Raymond Williams has suggested that pastoral poetry has always included elements of contrast and loss, and that, at least by the Renaissance, this nostalgic element often took a temporal aspect (Williams, *The Country and the City* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], 9–45). But there is nothing in Williams's argument that counters the claim that it was only in the later eighteenth century that the idealized state moves from some immediate past political situation to a distant and universal state of being, irretrievably lost as man becomes "civilized." There is no doubt, of course, that some of these new ideas do extend and modify older ones. For an investigation of early modern ideas of music's separation from universal nature, see Daniel Chua, "Vincenzo Galilei, Modernity, and the Division of Nature," in *Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Suzannah Clark and Alexander Rehding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 17–29. Chua discusses the "disenchantment" of nature in Galilei's time, an idea that obviously carried through the seventeenth-century debates about "ancient" and "modern" music and acted as a layer in the more radical transformation of the idea of nature I am considering here.

his claim to writing the first truly comprehensive history of music in any language.<sup>36</sup> By 1776, the year Hawkins's last volume emerged, Charles Burney had begun to publish his own four-volume *General History of Music*,<sup>37</sup> and by the end of the century these would be joined by similar endeavors in other languages, most notably Johann Nikolaus Forkel's *General History of Music (Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik)*,<sup>38</sup> which carried the process to an even more meticulously taxonomical level.

In seeking new breadth and a more continuous, causal connective tissue, these music historians often internalized not only general approaches, but also specific contemporary ideas, from other disciplines. The progressive "stages of mankind" was one of the most generally applied of these formulations – by no means confined to scientists such as Gregory. The idea that humanity passed through an inevitable series of stages, and that "civilized" people might see their own past by looking at societies that today were still in their "earlier" phases, was deeply compelling. The details and the number of "stages" might vary, from three for Vico and Turgot to the more eccentric ten of Condorcet, but the idea was broadly the same. In the Scottish Enlightenment, this historical determinism even garnered a name of its own: "conjectural history";<sup>39</sup> and in Scotland there were most commonly four main stages presented: the hunting-gathering stage, then a pastoral stage (in which the process of herding brought the recognition of property), a stage of settled agriculture, and finally a modern commercial stage.<sup>40</sup> Each of these periods might be subdivided, of course, but the overall effect was the same. The new notion of human progress made it more difficult to see "art" as the unproblematic admixture to "nature" that had upheld the pastoral tradition and general formulations such as Pope's epigrams. The natural state had been lost to the "sentimental" creative artist.

<sup>36</sup> 1: iv–v especially, but see entire Preface. <sup>37</sup> London, 1776–89.

<sup>38</sup> Leipzig: im Schwicker Verlag, 1788–1801.

<sup>39</sup> The terms "theoretical" or "conjectural history" were consciously coined slightly retrospectively by the philosopher Dugald Stewart in his memoirs of Adam Smith, given as lectures in 1793, and published shortly afterward, prefixed to Smith's posthumously published *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (London: T. Cadell, Jr. and W. Davies, 1795), xlii. For some brief overview of Scottish Enlightenment concern with "conjectural history," see H. M. Höpfl, "From Savage to Scotsman: Conjectural History in the Scottish Enlightenment," *Journal of British Studies* 17 (1978), 19–40.

<sup>40</sup> See Silvia Sebastiani, "Conjectural History vs. the Bible: Eighteenth-Century Scottish Historians and the Idea of History in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*," *Cromohs (Cyber Review of Modern Historiography)* 6 (2001), 1–6, <URL: [http://www.cromohs.unifi.it/6\\_2001/sebastiani.html](http://www.cromohs.unifi.it/6_2001/sebastiani.html)>, 1. The four stages were basically a version of Turgot's three stages, with the last stage split into two. On Turgot's stages, see Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 27–8. On the four stages theory itself, see Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). Meek reads Turgot's work as already expressing four stages (*Social Science*, 68–76).

While various viewpoints in the later eighteenth century are sometimes grouped as “Enlightenment” and “anti-Enlightenment” (or “proto-Romantic”), these different camps actually shared in their rejection of the older idea of nature as a static order including all humanity, both of them instead embracing the new secular, teleological historiography.<sup>41</sup> The most “rational” philosophes were always trumpeting “progress” of course, but the so-called anti-Enlightenment backlash of a Rousseau also relied heavily on the grand, comparative historiographical scope of a Voltaire or Turgot, and on the radical, rational, secular strand of universalism drawn in from the natural sciences. In fact, Rousseau’s view of the truly savage, original state of humanity was not flattering; he had chosen a slightly later “state of nature” to idealize, when there was a certain amount of social activity and familial affection, but not yet a rigid and decadent society.<sup>42</sup> By painting a dark picture of the very first humans – as brutes – Rousseau contradicted long-held religious views of humanity’s “decay” since Adam’s fall, and even more recent “liberal” attempts to reconcile the story of Genesis with modern science.<sup>43</sup> Gregory had openly echoed the Swiss thinker exactly on this account;<sup>44</sup> and his Scottish Enlightenment contemporary Lord Kames, ostensibly a religious man, went so far as to claim in his *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774) that humanity’s progress by stages was inconsistent with the biblical account of creation: there must have been several different original couples.<sup>45</sup> In short, the

<sup>41</sup> Peter France and others have thus interpreted the “Enlightenment” not as a thoroughgoing and unified set of ideas, but as an increasingly wide and open set of debates based on certain running themes. See for example France, “Primitivism and Enlightenment: Rousseau and the Scots,” *Yearbook of English Studies* 15 (1985), 64–79.

<sup>42</sup> See Arthur O. Lovejoy, “The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau’s *Discourse on Inequality*,” in *Essays in the History of Ideas*, 14–37; see also Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 242–87; and George W. Stocking, Jr., “Scotland as the Model of Mankind: Lord Kames’ Philosophical View of Civilization,” in *Toward a Science of Man: Essays in the History of Anthropology*, ed. Timothy H. H. Thoresen (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), 65–89, esp. 83–7.

<sup>43</sup> One more recent outlook propounded by several relatively liberal theologians (such as Bishop Thomas Sprat, who had been involved in the founding of the Royal Society in the 1660s) took on board a Baconian, optimistic vision of continuous progress; in this narrative, humanity was being guided by God to regain its former status after Adam’s initial error; but still the earliest humans could be depicted in paradise, so the anti-biblical tension inherent in Rousseau’s work was avoided. Later, the idea of “divine instruction” was invoked to explain narratives of “progress” after the Fall. (On this see Harris, *Anthropological Theory*, 55–9.)

<sup>44</sup> Gregory’s Preface contains various footnotes to “Rousseau” without citing specific works. Gregory also sent Rousseau a copy of this book in 1766 with a letter in which Gregory spoke of himself as being in an ideal position to champion and publicize some of Rousseau’s ideas (see R. A. Leigh, “Rousseau and the Scottish Enlightenment,” *Contributions to Political Economy* 5 [1986], 18).

<sup>45</sup> See Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1774), Book 1, sketch 1 (1: 1–44, esp. 38–40). Kames played down his claim by suggesting that the ancestral pairs may have split from each other only in the wake of Babel

acceptance of a secular, teleological view of history, in which civilization pulled irreversibly away from nature, was shared by writers who were openly "pro-progress" and those who were ambivalent or opposed to the supposed refinements of modern society.

Thus did later eighteenth-century thinkers come to cast nature as the *opposite* of and precursor to "civilization," rather than in its older role as the basis and overarching framework of civilization. Since nature was now a term tied to human primitive *origins*, writers investigating nature as an aesthetic domain in the 1760s and 1770s were looking for traces of the music's creative origins rather than its function – whether like Rousseau they idealized music from a "state of nature," whether like Hawkins and Burney they believed that constant progress had brought society and its music to a higher place *away* from that nature, or whether like Gregory they wavered back and forth.

The self-conscious temporal awareness shared by these writers was in the end responsible for overturning the pastoral approach to universalism. Dryden's invocation of Scottish melody's "rude sweetness" in 1700 had been easily integrated into a network of familiar pastoral conventions, and probably for this very reason Dryden left it unelaborated. If Dryden's language showed an early awareness of art as an agent working at some remove from nature, that view was not ultimately inconsistent with pastoral leveling and universal generic rules. Meanwhile, Gregory's defense of Scottish music's original natural "wildness," against Rizzio and other intrusive "refiners," is something quite new. Gregory replaces the leveling effect of pastoral with a reminder of distance: his wild nature is not part of a set of universal human rules, but a *precursor* to "civilization" and its rules. Indeed, Gregory's nature departed from "pastoral" in a more literal sense too: according to the current theories of staged history, Gregory's idealized "wildness" comes from humanity's *pre-pastoral* stage – more primordial and artless even than the later pastoral stage that through animal herding brought ideas of personal property. The new music of nature came from a state that was inherently separate from modernity, outside of any magical, leveling Arcadia accessible to us now. This sense of temporal distance from the "primitive" – distance from humanity's original role as unselfconscious part of nature – would soon allow folk music to become a meaningful idea.

(1: 39), but he elsewhere acted as though he took polygenesis for granted, and he became associated with the idea of "preadamite" man in the eyes of many (see Stocking, "Scotland as the Model of Mankind," 85–6). The third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* contained a religiously informed diatribe against such ideas in conjectural history, a diatribe that could easily be construed as much more "anti-Enlightenment" than the semi-primitivistic claims of Rousseau, Kames, and Gregory that it countered. For an account of this see Sebastiani, "Conjectural History."



### **Nature as the Other: the anthropologizing of music**

The process whereby the new idea of nature came to underlie a conception of folk music involved the creation of primitive Others to embody the earlier, natural stages of humanity. The universalizing urges of the Enlightenment, whether in history or any other field of knowledge, were carried out using rigorous “scientific” cataloguing and classification; and conjectural history, with its careful separation of historical stages, painted a world in which Europeans could catalogue and learn about these Others – as past versions of themselves – to understand themselves fully. A whole new horizon of potential learning appeared to scholars infused with this idea. If philology was the first discipline based almost entirely on an Enlightenment teleological and comparative view of history,<sup>46</sup> the same universalizing, categorical approach was soon opened up to a broader range of material – including music – in order to get to the bottom of the “essential nature” or “character” of people and things.<sup>47</sup>

To begin with, there was a change in attitude toward the study of classical antiquity. The field had become less scholastic and more rigorously comparative, intensifying the Renaissance debate about the relative value of ancient and modern culture by reflecting new viewpoints on progress, degeneracy, and the gulf of time. Music was increasingly embroiled in this process. The extant reports documenting the miraculous effects of ancient Greek music on its listeners had puzzled medieval musicians, and inspired musicians in the Renaissance; but in the late eighteenth century the classical ancients began in much musical discourse to play a role increasingly akin to that of the “savages.” Their music could now be viewed as a catalogued developmental stage rather than as the object lesson it had been for earlier times. Hawkins and Burney, who focused always on the “science” of music, its “progress” and “inventions,” had no time for fantastic claims about the effects of ancient music. These historians explained away reports of such miracles or dismissed them outright.<sup>48</sup> A more ambivalent writer such as Gregory admitted the miracles might be “exaggerated,” but he clung to them: his whole point was that *despite* the fact that “the Science of Music was in a very low state among

<sup>46</sup> See Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 285–7.

<sup>47</sup> See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1970), ch. 5. Page 139 especially is concerned with the idea of establishing the “essential character” of different parts of knowledge, an idea that would figure prominently in musical scholarship.

<sup>48</sup> See for example Hawkins, *General History*, 1: 166–7, and all of ch. 2. This phenomenon in Burney will be discussed in Chapter 4, below.

the Ancients . . . these very deficiencies might render their music more expressive and powerful.”<sup>49</sup> Again, the issue was not which side of the debate was taken. Both sides now conceived the past to be more “natural” than the civilized present, whether or not they idealized that natural state.

Whereas a focus on the Greek and Roman empires looked explicitly to the past to find the natural Other, the idea of inevitable stages opened up the possibility of finding the past preserved within the present as well, without of course collapsing the awareness of time and progress. Existing “primitive” cultures were now seen as living fossils – vestiges of the past stages in the present;<sup>50</sup> and a new all-encompassing “philosophy” of human development emerged:<sup>51</sup> the anthropological disciplines. This group of fields (including Orientalism and folklore studies) was truly a product of the eighteenth century, combining a pressing contemporary question (how people came to be as they were – the nature-nurture question) with the standard contemporary approach to answering that question (comparative, universal, historical).<sup>52</sup> Each of these new

<sup>49</sup> Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 94.

<sup>50</sup> This phenomenon came to characterize much European Enlightenment thought, and underlies later thinking as well. David Gramit examines manifestations of the same attitude in the early nineteenth-century musical discourse in Germany (*Cultivating Music: The Aspirations, Interests, and Limits of German Musical Culture, 1770–1848* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002], 29, 33–9, 45–6).

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Sprat’s early envisioning of a “Philosophy of Mankind” (cited in Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 164), would combine with Voltaire’s “Philosophy of History” (*Philosophie de l’histoire*, [Geneva], 1765, published under the name l’Abbe Bazin) to form general buzzwords for the writers of universal history in the eighteenth century, perhaps culminating with Herder’s *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Riga and Leipzig, 1784–91). The process was continued in the various formulations of the German idealist philosophers about universal history. However, between Herder’s writing and the time Hegel gave his famous lectures on the philosophy of history, “philosophers” also began to see their domain as a particular kind of thought, more separate from general scientific and historical knowledge. For a general discussion of this phenomenon, see R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), part III.

<sup>52</sup> See Murray J. Leaf, *Man, Mind, and Science: A History of Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), chs. 1–2, 5–6; Harris, *Rise of Anthropological Theory*, especially 10–52, 82–9; and Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard, *A History of Anthropological Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), esp. chs. 1–5. On Orientalism, see Edward Said, *Orientalism*, especially pp. 3 and 42 on the Enlightenment roots of Orientalism. Strictly speaking, “folklore” was not named until 1846, by William John Thoms (see a reprint of the original letter coining the term in Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore* [Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965], 4–6), but the field as such had really been around well before. Giuseppe Cocchiara actually begins his history of folklore in Europe with the discovery of the Americas, arguing that this formed the idea of the savage. He then works in the connection of the savage to the Oriental as Others over the next two centuries (see Cocchiara, *History of Folklore*, chs. 1–2). This seems more a “pre-history” of the field though, since it is where the Other becomes allied to a general “philosophy of man” that the isolated earlier accounts by missionaries and eccentrics form into a more modern anthropological discipline, and it is when the Other turns inward, to be found within “civilized” countries (as a class or other group), that folklore seems to



disciplines animated sets of living Others that were idealized and stereotyped (with both positive and negative qualities) as representatives of universal stages that Europeans believed they had already passed through – foils for “modern,” “civilized” European society.<sup>53</sup> Early “anthropology” proper dealt primarily with the “savage” abroad (tending to focus on the relationship between varying physical characteristics of humans and the culture or climate); meanwhile the Orientalists created the “Easterner” as a preserved version of antiquity. For writers of universal historical narratives, musical or otherwise, these various Others came together to represent the early stages of human history and the arts. Hawkins, Burney, and Forkel all felt compelled to deal with the “primitive” roots of music, in order to understand the foundation of “advanced,” modern practice; and we encounter in the first part of each of their works chapters dealing with the “infancy” of the musical art – chapters that group cognitively the ancients, the Orientals, and the savages.

By the 1770s, these three strands of “natural, primitive” music were also regularly joined by the English-language progenitor of folk music: “national music.” (Gregory’s use of the term national music – interchangeable with natural music – is one of the earliest examples.) But whereas the “ancient” was separated by literal time, and the savage and Oriental by space as figurative time, the category of the folk depended on reducing temporal distance to an entirely figurative idea – on finding pockets of the primitive within modern Europe. Soon after folklore was so named in English, in the mid-nineteenth century, the Folk-Lore Society’s own canonic adopted definition of their field became: “the science which treats of the survivals of archaic belief and customs in modern ages.”<sup>54</sup> Folklorists depended on finding “natural” people persisting in the West, still somehow uncorrupted and unaffected by both the supposed progress and decadence of modern civilization all around them.<sup>55</sup>

take on firmer disciplinary boundaries of its own. Cocchiara charts these processes at length in chapters 3–10, beginning with Enlightenment attempts to understand the role of popular superstitions and fables within European society.

<sup>53</sup> Pioneering works on the general question of the approach to the Other in these fields were Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), and Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>54</sup> This is from G. L. Gomme, “The Science of Folk-Lore,” *Folk-Lore Journal* 3 (1885), 14. The definition remained a working one for folk music scholarship until the IFMC came up with its own definition of “folk music” in 1954. Cecil Sharp, for instance, praised Gomme’s “clear definition” in his own work (*English Folk-Song* [London: Simpkin & Co., Novello & Co., 1907], 3).

<sup>55</sup> Twentieth-century folklorists have made every effort to overcome this prejudice that was so important to the formation of their discipline. Alan Dundes was a significant voice speaking against confining the study of folklore to the idealized rural peasantry; he defined “folk” as “any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor” (*Study of Folklore*, 2). But it has been difficult to escape completely from the original foundations of the discipline without reducing it to a meaningless label, as

**Nature and “the folk”: the “ancient and Oriental”  
come to Europe through Scotland**

Like the folk themselves, national music was conceived as a vestige of music's ancient and Eastern roots, but preserved in modern times within the civilized continent of Europe.<sup>56</sup> As it happened, Scotland would provide the poetic and musical bridge from antiquity to Europe, and hence spur the recognition of folk music. In 1760, James Macpherson published his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry: Collected in the Highlands of Scotland and Translated from the Galic or Erse Language*,<sup>57</sup> followed over the next three years by *Fingal: An Ancient Epic Poem, in Six Books*<sup>58</sup> and *Temora: An Ancient Epic Poem in Eight Books*.<sup>59</sup> Macpherson, an educated middle-class Highlander who spoke Gaelic and English, claimed he was putting before the public “authentic” translations of the works of the third-century Celtic bard Ossian, which he had personally collected in the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland. In reality, he had taken some short fragments of orally transmitted poetry and fused them together into an Epic himself, interpolating large chunks, inventing or changing characters, and adjusting the existing short ballads, elegies, and lyric elements he had gathered into consistent “parts” of this larger story. From the beginning, Ossian was wrapped in controversy. The Scottish clergyman and scholar Hugh Blair wrote a long dissertation on the authenticity of the poems,<sup>60</sup> while in England Samuel Johnson fiercely denounced them as forgeries. (The latter theory seemed to benefit from the fact that Macpherson repeatedly seemed unable to produce the “originals” from which he had translated.) But the Scots in general rallied behind Ossian as “genuine.” Most Highlanders were familiar with some of the poems circulating in oral tradition of which Macpherson had made use;<sup>61</sup> and this was one reason they were almost all inclined to lend their support, enthusiastically or at least hesitantly – in the latter case seeing the poems as reworked compilations of truly ancient relics.<sup>62</sup> A reason perhaps at least as important, though, was that Ossian gave them a national Epic, an ancient

the debates I discussed in the Introduction make clear; I will return to this question in later chapters.

<sup>56</sup> See Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, 84–6, for a brief discussion of the idea of “Volk as primitive other.”

<sup>57</sup> Edinburgh: G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1760.

<sup>58</sup> London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1762.

<sup>59</sup> London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1763.

<sup>60</sup> Hugh Blair, *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal* (London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1763).

<sup>61</sup> See Derick S. Thomson, *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's Ossian* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952), and Fiona Stafford, *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and The Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988).

<sup>62</sup> See Stafford, *Sublime Savage*, 169.

pedigree, and raised them to the center of European interest – all essential in an era of cultural nationalism.

Ossian did not spring up in a vacuum. The 1745 Rebellion had brought the Highlands vividly to the attention of both the Lowlanders and English; so interest was already high enough before Macpherson published the epics that a subscription could be collected to finance his tours of the Highlands to collect material.<sup>63</sup> As William Donaldson has put it, Bonnie Prince Charlie had

emerged from the mists accompanied by [his army]: a living museum of ancient manners, dress and arts, the last remnants (or so it was thought) of the once mighty Celtic civilization which had dominated Europe ... This was no footnote in a dusty classical text by Livy or Tacitus, but an actual survival from high antiquity, and as such immediately assimilable to the fashionable theories of primitive culture which shaped contemporary thinking about man and society.<sup>64</sup>

Before Macpherson's writings, outsiders were already reacting to the raised profile of the Highlands after the forty-five. The English poet William Collins wrote in 1749 his "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland, Considered as the subject of Poetry," imploring: "Then to my ear transmit some gentle song / Of those whose lives are yet sincere and plain ... blest in primal innocence."<sup>65</sup> But Collins's poem was published only many years later, posthumously, and unlike Macpherson's work, it did not itself claim to be a remnant of the "ancient" society. And, whereas the poet Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair had presented Gaelic poems in the original in 1752, hoping to capture general interest, Macpherson "translated" his poems into strikingly unconventional English prose. (Macpherson chose to abandon traditional verse forms and classical turns of phrase in his Ossian translations.) Ossian was thus much more effective than the earlier works in bringing the "Highlands" to life for outsiders.

Macpherson's instincts about how to build on current trends extended well beyond writing style. Thomas Blackwell, who taught at the University in Aberdeen when Macpherson was there, had implied in his *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (London, 1735) a version of

<sup>63</sup> See *ibid.*, 116. <sup>64</sup> Donaldson, *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 9.

<sup>65</sup> Lines 159–60, 167. Cited in *The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, and Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Roger Lonsdale (London and New York: Longman, 1969), 513–14. Collins himself was probably influenced by the description of the residents of St. Kilda by Martin Martin, who had visited the island as early as 1698. Martin believed these Hebridean islanders existed in ignorant bliss of the rest of humanity, separated from war, foreign contact, etc. Theirs was the "Golden Age" of legend, though for Martin this Golden Age is compatible with Christianity. It is a typical Christian pastoral vision. See Lonsdale's footnote on pp. 513–14. On other predecessors to Macpherson's work, see Stafford, *Sublime Savage*, 61–75, 99–100.

conjectural history with an idealized phase placed early on the historical timeline (i.e. near the "savage" end), very similar to but pre-dating Rousseau's version of history (Blackwell's book was later praised by German Romantics in its own right). Blackwell was almost certainly an influence on Macpherson.<sup>66</sup> Sentences such as "Neither does it seem to be given to one and the same Kingdom, to be thoroughly civilized, and afford proper subjects for Poetry" must have grabbed the attention of the aspiring poet.<sup>67</sup> Macpherson seems to have been equally influenced by Edmund Burke's 1757 *Philosophical Enquiry into . . . the Sublime and Beautiful*, taking over from Burke not only the general tone of the sublime, but even what would become one of his favorite catchphrases, the "joy of grief."<sup>68</sup> Macpherson's family had participated in the forty-five on the Jacobite side when he was a child, and he had a first-hand resentment of the forced dissolution of Highland traditions in the aftermath. A nationalist in the modern sense, he believed that language made a cultural nation, and he filled out MacMhaighstir Alasdair's proposition that the Celtic culture had once dominated Europe, by suggesting that successive waves of Celtic-derived nations had settled France, Germany, and the British Isles, with Scotland eventually containing the descendants of the oldest wave of Gaelic Celts to have entered Britain.<sup>69</sup> He claimed too that the Scottish version of Gaelic was older and thus more "pure" than the Irish,<sup>70</sup> reversing the popular view (and the truth).

Macpherson's sensitivity to current issues led to a body of work that could not have been more timely. It built on and in turn reinforced the bittersweet self-consciousness of the time by invoking nature in its new role as distant and irrecoverable purity. Ossian became the way for Europeans to look northward to find the savage in their midst, and Macpherson made sure that the savage they found was a noble one. The influence of Ossian across Europe need hardly be reiterated. It fired the imaginations of the German and French Romantics, from Herder to Napoleon to Brahms. It turned Scotland into a particularly popular tourist destination – as Europeans came to search for the stomping grounds of the Ossianic characters. Geographical features were even named in honor of these heroes, such as "Fingal's Cave," a cavern of breathtaking basaltic pillars on the tiny Hebridean island of Staffa off

<sup>66</sup> See Stafford, *Sublime Savage*, 28–35, 85–8; and Donaldson, *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 10–11.

<sup>67</sup> Blackwell, *Enquiry*, 26, quoted in Donaldson, *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, and see commentary, pp. 10–11, 17.

<sup>68</sup> Simpson, *Protean Scot*, 41.

<sup>69</sup> See the end of the Preface to *Fingal* (unpaginated), and i–iii; and James Macpherson, *History of Great Britain and Ireland* (Dublin: James Williams, 1771), 6–58. See also Donaldson, *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 15–16.

<sup>70</sup> Macpherson, *Temora*, xxi.

Scotland's west coast, publicized to the world in the 1770s by the British explorer Joseph Banks.<sup>71</sup>

The sort of language that would blossom in Ossian reception is already present in Macpherson's own introductory essays. Of the "stages of human society" Macpherson writes: "As the first is the closest to nature, so, of course, it is the most disinterested and noble";<sup>72</sup> and he situates Ossian firmly in this first stage, before the corrupting force of the establishment of property (and thus even before pastoral society). He also claims that the Highlanders of his own time are isolated and thus preserve the oldest traditions; their language "is pure and original, and their manners are those of an ancient and unmixed race of men."<sup>73</sup> (Of course he frets too about the disappearance of this ancient way of life:<sup>74</sup> from the first conception of national or folk customs as preserved relics, they have been perceived as threatened with extinction.) Blair, in his *Critical Dissertation* supporting Macpherson, immediately picked up the same sort of claims and concerns, while adapting them to the usual Scottish Enlightenment "four stages" of man view (Macpherson himself had used only three). Like Macpherson, Blair assigned Ossian carefully to the first stage, before agriculture or even pasturage.<sup>75</sup>

Blair also introduced or emphasized other elements that would henceforth become familiar tropes of Ossian reception. He waxed enthusiastic over the idea of a culture of "northern nations" (4), invoking in their Druids, Bards, and Scalds a weighty counterpart to Homer (4–13). He advocated the study of the "ancient poems of nations" to learn more about ourselves through "our fellow-creatures in the most artless ages . . . before those refinements of society had taken place, which enlarge indeed, and diversify the transactions, but disguise the manners of mankind" (1). He invoked the "irregular and unpolished" nature of the poems as downright positive qualities, bringing that "enthusiasm, that vehemence and fire, which are the soul of poetry" (2). Blair even superimposed an organic metaphor over his "four stages": "The progress of the world in this respect resembles the progress of age in man" (3). This creates an ambivalent, carefully balanced idealized era – placed not quite at the crude beginning, but still in the "infancy" (2) of man, a period when "we find the fire and the enthusiasm of the most early times, combined with an amazing degree of regularity and art" (11) – a period still before the decline of the "sublime" (3, 20). These ideas would

<sup>71</sup> Banks's account of the cave was printed at length, with plates illustrating "Fingal's Cave," in Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland and A Voyage to the Hebrides*, 1772 (Chester: John Monk, 1774), 261–9.

<sup>72</sup> Macpherson, *Temora*, xii.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. <sup>74</sup> See for example *Fingal*, xv.

<sup>75</sup> Blair, *Critical Dissertation*, 16. See also Meek, *Ignoble Savage*, 180–1. Parenthetical citations in the following two paragraphs refer to Blair, *Critical Dissertation*.

become rhetorical clichés, catchphrases in universal coinage in the years to come. This was exactly the type of wording that allowed early anthropological thinkers such as Lord Kames to use Ossian to spark and nourish their investigations.<sup>76</sup>

Most importantly, Blair tied the Highlanders directly to the “ancients,” the “Orientals,” and the “savages” – and through music:

Music or song has been found coaeval with society among the most barbarous nations . . . And before writing was invented, no other compositions, except songs or poems, could take such hold of the imagination and memory, as to be preserved by oral tradition, and handed down from one race to another . . . What we have been long accustomed to call the oriental vein of poetry, because some of the earliest poetical productions have come to us from the East, is probably no more oriental than occidental; it is characteristical of an age rather than a country; and belongs, in some measure, to all nations at a certain period. Of this the works of Ossian seem to furnish a remarkable proof. (3–4)

This was the sort of passage – replacing specific geography and real chronology with universal stages of history (a *figurative* chronology) – that would make possible an idea of folk music described in specific, classifying terms, set apart from art music. It was exciting that that this new Other was close at hand, unlike the ancient Greeks or Chinese. This discovery of the indigenous Other – both European and foreign – occasioned the birth of the folk, and of folkloric studies as “the survivals of archaic belief and customs in modern ages.”<sup>77</sup>

The idea that Scotland conserved ancient and Oriental musical traits within Europe was immediately reflected in the sort of observations made by the new wave of tourists to the Highlands. Of all the visitors drawn to Scotland by the high profile of Ossian and the controversy around the works, perhaps none is more famous than Dr. Johnson, since he was himself at the center of that controversy. Johnson’s devotee and ever-present sidekick James Boswell (a Scot) worked hard to convince Johnson, aging and inertial, to visit the north, and in 1773 they set off on a Highland tour. Both kept journals that were later published, and both commented on music. The primal nature of Highland music became a constant focus, whether the music was in a noble household, or humble labor songs. Boswell describes the “loud and wild howl” (126)<sup>78</sup> of women singing a waulking (cloth-working) song; and Johnson, hearing a bagpipe tune on Skye, recalls being informed that it was

<sup>76</sup> See Stocking, “Scotland as the Model of Mankind.”

<sup>77</sup> It came flooding into an already trickling stream of studies in Britain of “popular antiquities” (pagan rituals, proverbs, seasonal celebrations, etc.) which Richard Dorson considers the earliest interest in folklore. See Dorson, *The British Folklorists* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), ch. 1.

<sup>78</sup> The journals are lined up side by side with letters and other supplementary material in Pat Rogers, ed., *Johnson and Boswell in Scotland: A Journey to the Hebrides* (New



played during a clash of the clans in the distant past (103). The connection of Highland music to that of other primitive, natural Others is clearest when the travelers relate hearing the Gaelic songs of their boatmen on their trip back from Staffa. One of the clan chiefs who entertains them, Sir Allan MacLean, tells them that the “the Indians in America” sang “in the same manner while rowing” (262).<sup>79</sup> (The connection of “savages” to Highlanders is thus perpetuated from within by one of their own, if one of higher rank.) Johnson himself comments about the rowing songs, and the work-songs in general that “[t]he ancient proceleusmatic song, by which the rowers of galleys were animated, may be supposed to have been of this kind” (129). The Highland Scots are thus joined to both the American “primitives” and the “ancient” rowers.

Many writers have characterized the Ossianic “sentimental” (including its early reception by Blair and others) as not yet full-blown “Romanticism,” leaving the latter word to the throng who would draw on Ossian later. Macpherson still uses the word “taste” in a strongly eighteenth-century sense.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, unlike some who would follow him, he suggests a possible way for the present to model itself rationally on the past: “Men in the last [stage] have leisure to cultivate the mind, and to restore it, with reflection, to a primæval dignity of sentiment.”<sup>81</sup> This reconciliation comes *almost* without Schiller’s distance, though Macpherson’s use of the phrase “with reflection” suggests some of the same self-consciousness that would fascinate Schiller. Macpherson’s own attitudes were constantly reiterated by those British commentators who used Ossian to illustrate their ideals for music: taste and morals remained closely entwined, and specific suggestions were made about closing the gap between the present and the distant past. This would change from the 1790s, after which more and more time would be spent on imaginative projections into the world of the distant Other – with the assumption that such jumps into foreign and primitive worlds could nourish the present imagination organically without attempting to close the temporal separation. (Schiller himself found inspiration in Ossian, and wrote about it in his “On the Sublime.”<sup>82</sup>) From that time on, especially outside of Scotland, Ossian reception was less and less concerned with “taste,” with the moral effect of bardic poetry, or with its antiquary accuracy. Instead, the Romantics threw themselves into the “spiritual and the visionary” potential of the world Macpherson had created.<sup>83</sup>

Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). Parenthetical citations in this paragraph refer to this publication.

<sup>79</sup> On comparisons between the Highlanders and native Americans see also Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 17.

<sup>80</sup> See for example *Temora*, xx. <sup>81</sup> *Temora*, xii. <sup>82</sup> See Simpson, *Protean Scot*, 66.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–7, 247, quote from p. 67; see also Stafford, *Sublime Savage*, 177–8.



This last change will be considered further in later chapters, but even before it occurred, Ossian had helped cement the new vision of nature as inextricably linked with a figuratively “past” (i.e. “primitive”) state of humanity.<sup>84</sup> The Scots had gone from being seen as *unnatural* because backward (in Kirke’s unflattering description), to being seen as natural and thus timeless (in the pastoral visions of Ramsay and William Thomson), to being seen as natural because they were, once again, backward. Almost any writer on Scottish music after the early 1760s presented accounts colored by Ossian. (This is the background for Gregory’s values: for he too saw Ossian as exemplifying the golden natural age of humanity.<sup>85</sup>) And in all these accounts, the current sounds of Scotland came to represent what the authors wanted to uphold from the past. Furthermore, because of Ossian, Scottish music would also become the symbol of the natural in the new sense, as primitive, not only at home and in England but on the Continent, where the idea of Scottish music as nature had never figured in the earlier pastoral sense:<sup>86</sup> it was in an essay on Ossian that Herder coined the term “Volkslied.” Of course, Ossian’s influence in Europe was sometimes indirect – mediated through the wave of national antiquarian pursuits that ensued in Macpherson’s wake. In 1765, for example, Thomas Percy was directly spurred by the Ossian writings to publish another book that itself then reached audiences across Europe, and inspired the likes of Herder: *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (which in fact included both English and Scottish fragments).<sup>87</sup> In any case, Scotland, and especially the Highlands, was becoming the crucible in which the new concepts that would eventually become “folk music” would be tested.

### **Nature in music: Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

Before natural “national music” could really gel as a precise category, however, the new conception of nature had to be translated into more

<sup>84</sup> For a summary and furthering of recent Ossian scholarship in the field of folklore, see the issue of *Journal of American Folklore* 114 (2001) edited by James Porter (number 454), especially Porter’s own “‘Bring Me the Head of James Macpherson’: The Execution of Ossian and the Wellsprings of Folkloristic Discourse” (396–435).

<sup>85</sup> “A very beautiful picture of this state of society is exhibited in the works of Ossian” (Gregory, *Comparative View*, 6th edn [1766], viii).

<sup>86</sup> A example from Germany shows that even around 1740, Scotland did not yet represent nature on the Continent. Mattheson considered some Scottish hornpipes to sound “so extraordinary in their melodies that one might think that they originated from the court composers of the North or South Pole” (*Mattheson’s Capellmeister*, 460). Note there is no idea of primitivism, only exoticism here. And elsewhere Mattheson discusses the “Scottish style” (which by virtue of the “Scotch song” had already gained a reputation on the Continent) as just another national style (*ibid.*, 223). It would take Ossian before Scotland represented “wild” nature across Europe.

<sup>87</sup> 3 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1765).

specifically musical terms. I have already considered Rousseau's role in divorcing nature from its older, less equivocal, and often eschatological framework of meanings, and giving the word more ambivalent tones – so it came to represent an objective, past stage of historical or artistic development, a stage idealized and carefully balanced between the extremes of brutality and crudity on the one end, and civilization (i.e. Baroque vainglory) on the other. However, Rousseau's traceable impact on the formation of "folk music" and "art music" had a more directly musical side as well, for it was Rousseau – one of the few late eighteenth-century philosophers to engage seriously with music – who codified how this version of nature *sounded*.

Many of Rousseau's most lasting ideas on the subject were spurred by his personal rivalry with Jean-Philippe Rameau and his rejection of Rameau's idea that harmony – based on the overtone sequence – provided the underlying natural grounding for music. For Rousseau, it was melody, not harmony, that represented nature. Rameau might be considered the ultimate example of the older conception of nature as all-encompassing order (i.e. as inclusive of civilization, since musicians learned to use nature through studying harmony), while Rousseau as the great disseminator of the newer view of nature as the opposite of rules. Thus, although Rameau's ideas about harmony became the fundamental basis of the pedagogy of music theory, in the later eighteenth century Rousseau's version of how to translate nature into musical style turned out to be much more influential at a philosophical level – insofar as homophonic music based on simple and accessible melody established itself across Europe as the "natural" ideal.<sup>88</sup>

Rousseau argued for melodic prominence through a twist on the old mimetic argument. In his *Dictionnaire de musique*, Rousseau asserted that "Music is . . . divided into *melody* and *harmony* . . . We may, and perhaps we ought to, divide music likewise into *natural* and *imitative* [*italics original*]." (The *Dictionnaire* was widely read at the time; I am citing a partial English translation from one year after the original French version. A full translation appeared a few years later.<sup>89</sup>)

<sup>88</sup> On "nature" in the Rousseau/Rameau debate see also Helga de la Motte-Haber, *Musik und Natur: Naturanschauung und musikalische Poetik* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 2000), 134–43, and Alexander Rehding's commentary on this in a review article ("Eco-Musicology," *JRMA* 127 [2002], 315–16). Rehding's caveat that contrasting views of nature existed simultaneously and should not be steamrolled into an oversimplified narrative is important, though I maintain such a narrative can be useful if we admit that we are tracking general trends rather than the thoughts of every writer.

<sup>89</sup> This is cited from *An Appendix to Grassineau's Musical Dictionary, Selected from the Dictionnaire de musique of J. J. Rousseau* (London: J. Robson, 1769). This "appendix" was actually bound together with, but paginated separately from, *A Musical Dictionary . . . by James Grassineau* (London: J. Robson, 1769), which is itself basically a translation of an earlier French work by Sébastien de Brossard. The passages cited above are s.v. "Music" in the Rousseau "Appendix," 28. In the later 1770s, a full English translation of

Rousseau includes in his first category (the "natural") music that is "merely harmonical."<sup>90</sup> In this passage, "natural music" is "confined to the mere nature of sounds."<sup>91</sup> By conceding the word natural to harmonic music, Rousseau seems to be trying to leave empty Rameau's less easily refuted claims for the natural basis of his harmonic system. Rousseau continues that harmonic music, "affecting the senses only, does not convey its impressions to the heart . . ." Meanwhile, *imitative* music "by lively, accented, and so to say, speaking inflexions, expresses all passions, paints all pictures, represents all objects, makes the whole system of nature subservient to its learned imitations, and by that means conveys, even to the heart of man, those sentiments which are proper to affect it."<sup>92</sup> It is in this music that we should search for the glorious affects of ancient music.

If Rousseau finds one way to subvert Rameau's "nature" (by cleverly conceding to Rameau that harmony was in a sense "natural," only to leave that word ringing as an empty attribute), in other places he made it very clear that "nature," in the sense that he cared about it, was the ultimate quality to be endorsed in music. For Rousseau, Rameau's harmonic idea of "nature" missed the mark completely, for it persisted in locating nature outside of and above humanity, rather than looking for it in our lost primal selves, based on emerging anthropological ideas.<sup>93</sup> In his *Lettre sur la musique française* of 1753, Rousseau famously related music to nature through the belief that melody imitated the "natural" accent of early human communication – claiming along the way that French music (and the French language) were irrecoverably artificial, whereas Italian music (and language) had preserved more of the emotionally imitative character of primitive melodic speech. In the article on "Harmony" in his *Dictionnaire*, Rousseau extended his earlier

Rousseau appeared: *A Dictionary of Music, Translated from the French of Mons. J. J. Rousseau by William Waring* (London: J. French, [1778–9?]).

<sup>90</sup> Grassineau "Appendix," 28. The original French in this passage was "Musique qui n'est qu'Harmonieuse" (*Dictionnaire de musique* [Paris: Chez la Veuve Duchesne, 1768]), 311. Interestingly, this particular passage is mistranslated by Waring, rendered as "not harmonious" instead of "merely harmonic" (see *A Dictionary of Music*, 259).

<sup>91</sup> Grassineau "Appendix," 28 (italics mine), and see also p. 23 for this use of "mere nature." Rousseau's French in this particular sentence does not include the word "nature" (it reads "borne au seul physique des Sons" [*Dictionnaire*, 310]). But the implications are the same, since he has just divided music into "naturelle" and "imitative" varieties. He goes on to say that it is in the *imitative*, "et non dans l'Harmonique ou naturelle" (311) that we should seek to understand music's powers over us and in ancient times, so it is clear that he is using "naturelle" in a derogatory sense here, equating it to Rameau's claims for music's harmonic (versus melodic) underpinnings.

<sup>92</sup> "Appendix," 28.

<sup>93</sup> For more on this, see Downing Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), ch. 4.

ideas, coming down particularly hard on Rameau in a diatribe that achieved British circulation not only via the two early translations of the *Dictionnaire* but also by virtue of being reprinted in Burney's *General History*.<sup>94</sup> Rousseau here insists that harmony only appears in the music of the "northern nations," to compensate for the loss of melodic inflections present in the speech and languages of all people in the state of nature. Since harmony was unknown to the Greeks and other supposedly primitive Others whose music had had wondrous effects, then harmony must be "nothing more than a gothic and barbarous invention, to which we should never have adhered, if we had been sensible to the true beauties of the art, and of the value of *music truly natural*." Harmonic beauties are "learned beauties," "whereas the true [melodic] beauties of music, being *in nature*," could be felt by "all men" – with "all men" including of course all of Rousseau's various primitive foils to modern Europeans.<sup>95</sup>

Both the *Dictionnaire* and the *Lettre* were widely cited in Britain, with the latter perhaps even more widely cited by Scottish writers.<sup>96</sup> Drawing on the two writings, the Scots were finding a replacement for the pastoral interpretation of their music. At mid-century, Geminiani had implied, despite his praise for Rizzio, that melody was best served by "improvement" into two, three, or four parts,<sup>97</sup> and Geminiani's arrangements of Scottish songs are quite harmonically contrived. This gave ammunition to the other side. Scots could invoke Rousseau to claim that their music needed no help from outside. When they quoted the *Lettre*, the Scottish writers cast their own country in the natural role Rousseau had assigned to Italy.<sup>98</sup> Gregory, for instance, concedes some points to Rousseau about Italian music, and then reassigns the Italian virtues to Scotland. He writes:

Vocal Music is much confined by the language it is performed in. – The harmony and sweetness of the Greek and Italian languages gives them great advantages over the English and French, which are harsh, unmusical, and full

<sup>94</sup> See Burney, *General History* 1: 146–7. Burney's translation of this passage appeared chronologically between the Grassineau and the Waring English versions of the *Dictionary*.

<sup>95</sup> This translation is again from the Grassineau "Appendix" of 1769, 22 (emphasis mine). Rousseau's original wording for the phrases I have italicized is "la Musique vraiment naturelle" and "au lieu que les véritables beautés de la Musique étant de la Nature" (*Dictionnaire*, 245).

<sup>96</sup> Rousseau had expanded his ideas further in his *Essai sur l'origine des langues où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l'imitation musicale* of c. 1760. But since the essay on the origin of languages was published only later, it had less immediate effect; and Rousseau said many of the same things in the *Dictionnaire*, in his articles on melody, harmony, etc.

<sup>97</sup> See Fiske, *Scotland in Music*, 21.

<sup>98</sup> Clare Nelson has also noted the adaptation of Rousseau's ideas to Scottish music by Scottish philosophers and aestheticians. See Nelson, "Tea-table Miscellanies: The Development of Scotland's Song Culture, 1720–1800," *Early Music* 28 (2000), 604, 607.

of consonants; and this among other inconveniences occasions perpetual sacrifices of the quantity to the modulation [Gregory’s footnote here says simply “Rousseau”]. This is one great cause of the slightness and want of variety of the French Music, which they in vain endeavor to cover and supply by laboured and complex accompaniments. – As vocal Music is the first and most natural Music of every country, it is reasonable to expect some analogy between it and the Poetry of the country, to which it is always adapted. – The great superiority of the Scotch songs to the English may in a great measure be accounted for from this Principle. The Scotch songs are simple and tender, full of strokes of Nature and Passion. – So is their Music.<sup>99</sup>

Soon Gregory puts Italian music itself into its typical role as whipping boy for the Scots. He does admit to liking some modern *galant*-style Italian music,<sup>100</sup> but is quite hard on Italian music in the older contrapuntal style – and on what the cult of the Italian has supposedly become in Britain: a taste for the *unnatural*, wailing castrati, and so forth.

This was the same path outlined by others at pains to distinguish Scottish melody from Italian. They reminded their readers that, generally speaking, Scottish music was more truly unadorned and unfigured, and thus embodied the supreme ideal of “nature.” William Tytler, who had so enthusiastically endorsed Tassoni’s claims for James I as native creator of the Scottish style, also accepts some Italian music from Pergolesi and his generation, but again his emphasis is on castigating Palestrina’s church music for want of melody, and he directs similar criticisms at Italian madrigals, arguing that since the “music of Italy was, at this time [in the sixteenth century], altogether artificial and harmonic,” it is no wonder that Gesualdo looked to the old Scottish music for inspiration.<sup>101</sup> (Tytler does not seem to care that Gesualdo’s own music is the supreme embodiment of the style he is deriding.) Tytler considers the benefits of some harmony, but not at the expense of “melody, the soul of music.”<sup>102</sup> This last phrase was taken up (plagiarized?) as a battle cry by the Glasgow bookseller, poet, and inventor Alexander Molleson, in a 1798 treatise called *Melody – The Soul of Music: An Essay Towards the Improvement of the Musical Art*.<sup>103</sup> Molleson makes no mention of Tytler, but echoes almost all of Tytler’s sentiments; then again, these sentiments were echoed in almost every treatise on or mention of Scottish music at the time. Molleson begins by trying to trace why “the Scottish airs” he knew from his youth, with their “simple and pathetic expression” affected him so much, yet so

<sup>99</sup> Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 107–8.

<sup>100</sup> I.e. Pergolesi, Caldara, etc. (*ibid.*, 118–19).

<sup>101</sup> Tytler, “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 211–13, 215. <sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 213–14.

<sup>103</sup> Glasgow: Courier Office, 1798, initially published anonymously. Parenthetical citations in this paragraph refer to this text. On the publication history of this essay see David Baptye, *Musical Scotland, Past and Present* (Paisley: J. and R. Parlane, 1894), 132.

much of “that refined harmonic music which is in such general use at present” did not (5–6). In a passage that shows its debts both to Rousseau and to Macpherson’s idea of Scottish music as an ancient survival, Molleson states that he was spurred on by learning that the ancient Greek music had accomplished its effects through the same reliance on simplicity and declamatory melody demonstrated in Ossian and Scottish music (6–11). As Downing Thomas shows, it was becoming increasingly common in this period to see music as a mystified origin of signs, a “natural” proto-language<sup>104</sup> but Molleson sought a more literal link than most: he tried to apply Rousseau’s ideas about the connection of “early” music and language at the specific level. He explains that he has experimented with seeking musical tones in impassioned speech, and vice versa, and admits the difficulty of his experiment, but gives one example he considers successful: he has always found that “The Cameronian’s Rant” sounds like two women scolding angrily (20–1). Molleson’s experiments effected a transfer of Rousseau’s ideas about speech-melody from the primordial “Orient” and “south” – to Scotland.<sup>105</sup>

One did not have to be Scottish to express the network of sentiments that crossed Rousseau with Ossian. John Brown, a clergyman from northern England, in his *Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music*,<sup>106</sup> lays out a carefully detailed musical version of conjectural history, outlining thirty-six stages along a timeline that music would go through in any civilization as it progressed. As his title implies, Brown, like Rousseau and like Kames and Gregory, idealizes an early, “natural” phase of conjectural history, that which humans pass through soon after entering into a social group – a phase followed of course by inevitable decline.<sup>107</sup> Thus, like his Scottish counterparts, Brown enthused over the state of humanity captured by Ossian (158–60); he traces music’s later decline to the decadence of the Roman empire (a theme that would soon be taken up by Gibbon), and he has much less to say about music since then. But what he does say is typical: he blames Guido of Arezzo’s

<sup>104</sup> Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language*, 9–10, and esp. chs. 2–4.

<sup>105</sup> Molleson only gets around to invoking Rousseau directly on the subject of melody on p. 58, but Rousseau’s ideas have obviously penetrated deeply, at least as mediated by others (such as Burney [who quoted large chunks of Rousseau on melody and harmony, despite expressing some doubts, see *General History*, 1: 146–9] and James Beattie [discussed in Chapter 3, below], both of whom Molleson cites often).

<sup>106</sup> London: L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1763. Parenthetical citations in this paragraph refer to this text.

<sup>107</sup> This did not stop Brown from taking issue with Rousseau elsewhere, when Rousseau’s idealizations came closer to home. See particularly his sermons on education, in which he criticizes Rousseau’s *Emile* for allowing children too much freedom, despite his respect for the man (Brown, *Sermons on Various Subjects* [London: L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1764], 1–66).



invention of counterpoint for decreasing the melodic aspect of music, making it less fit for poetry, and giving it an “*artificial and laboured Turn*” (198, *italics original*).<sup>108</sup> Song is lost to most modern European nations, with a few exceptions (198–9). Brown too eventually falls back explicitly on Rousseau’s national characterizations (207), but once again he finds a way to adjust these depictions, placing Scotland above Italy:

With Respect to the *Poetry*, the *Italian Canzonettes* are more elegantly written than the *Scotch*, though with less Nature and Passion. In the *Music* of the *Italian Canzonettes* there is little Variety: They soon disgust, by their sameness of Expression: The *Scotch Airs* are perhaps the truest Model of artless and pathetic musical Expression, that can be found in the whole compass of the Art. Some of them are said to have been the Composition of DAVID RIZZIO, who is supposed to have ingrafted the *Italian Regularity* and Elegance of Song, on the original wild and pathetic manner of the *Scots*. This tradition carries the appearance of Truth: for the *Scotch Airs* are of two different Kinds, easily distinguishable from each other: The one *regular*, and subject to the Rules of Counterpoint: The other wild and desultory, and such as do not easily receive the accompaniment of a Bass. The first of these may seem to have been the Composition or Reform of RIZZIO; but in Force of Expression and Pathos, the latter generally excel them: A circumstance which proves how little the Rules of modern Counterpoint have to do with the *Powers* of music. (200)

As an Englishman, Brown did not have the same need to reject the Rizzio mythology for national reasons, but his preference for the “wild” airs that Rizzio had not touched shows an outlook identical to Gregory’s, who was writing north of the border at the same time.

Thus Gregory, Molleson, Brown and Tytler all paint a similar picture of music. They cite Guido’s “invention of harmony” and Palestrina’s contrapuntal style as the crucial downturn in the history of music.<sup>109</sup> Harmony is to be avoided because it distracts the attention, and because it removes the pathetic quality of music and thus its force as a sympathetic moral force.<sup>110</sup> Melody alone can create these qualities, because of its “natural” link to language (either through Rousseau’s theory of inflected accents or through its union with poetry)<sup>111</sup> – while Harmony

<sup>108</sup> Brown may also have been a contributor to Charles Avison’s *Essay on Musical Expression*, in which similar sentiments had been expressed. See *Charles Avison’s Essay on Musical Expression, with related writings by William Hayes and Charles Avison*, ed. Pierre Dubois (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 20.

<sup>109</sup> See Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 95–6; Molleson, *Melody*, 52; Brown, *Poetry and Music*, 198; Tytler, “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 211–15.

<sup>110</sup> Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 96–7, 85, etc.; Molleson, *Melody*, 61–2; Brown, *Poetry and Music*, 221–9; Tytler, “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 230 (Tytler’s argument differs subtly, since he acknowledges harmonic church music to have a calming devotional force in the right setting; unlike the “simple melody” of love songs, however, he still claims that “Church-music has nothing to do with the passions.”)

<sup>111</sup> Molleson, *Melody*, 17–21; Brown, *Poetry and Music*, 27; Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 106–7; Tytler, “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 233–4.



ends up separating music from its powerful alliance with language in the abstract, or with poetry.<sup>112</sup> Ancient Greece and Ossian (perhaps joined by ancient China)<sup>113</sup> become the examples of the potential power of natural music in all the treatises.

Since the specific politics of mid-century Paris were partly responsible for Rousseau placing Italian music in the “natural” role, that role could be recast later in the century and outside of France. Eventually, Scotland emerged over Italy, using all of Rousseau’s own criteria, but in spite of Rousseau. Scottish music would ultimately come to represent the simple and natural for much of the rest of Europe. As we will see in later chapters, both Herder’s work in Germany (expanding the ideological expansions of “folk” and “art” music) and Burney’s work in England (formulating modal scales to underpin folk music) drew on, and furthered, the discourse linking Rousseau’s musical ideas of nature to Scotland.

### **Nature and the picturesque: the noble savage in the Highland landscape**

Pastoral references did not disappear when newer ways of relating to nature became more prominent, but pastoral’s meaning in music, as in literature and painting, changed. The “Pastoral” of Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony may remind us that nature could still sometimes invoke environment and setting rather than focusing only on basic human instinct and development as its subject matter. But Beethoven’s piece is still far removed from the pastoral of Corelli’s Christmas Concerto, because even when the subject at hand was partly or primarily nature as environment, the idea of nature as primal *human* drives and creativity (that is, as genius) had broken down the process of mediating any “nature” into music through generic rules. I pick up the idea of nature as genius in Chapter 3; but the general breakdown of the pastoral as generically conventionalized nature remains to be wrapped up here. It was even starker in arenas (such as Scottish music) where the human side of nature was at the center of the discourse in every respect, as “inner” content as well as “outer” form.

One way of labeling the later eighteenth-century attitude toward nature is with the word picturesque. A forceful movement in landscape gardening, art, and literature, the cult of the picturesque has been called by Christopher Hussey a “prelude to romanticism,” and an “interregnum

<sup>112</sup> Molleson, *Melody*, 63–6; Brown, *Poetry and Music*, Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 119–20, is a similar argument.

<sup>113</sup> See Brown, *Poetry and Music*, 168.

between classic and romantic” in each of the arts.<sup>114</sup> If the picturesque, as laid out in the later part of the century by such arbiters as Uvedale Price (in *An Essay on the Picturesque*, 1794), retained the strong eighteenth-century role for taste and often for moral effect, it also represented a special aesthetic category, one that tried to rise above Burke’s established categories of the sublime and beautiful, into a realm of combination and irregularity which represented “nature” in all her different guises: smooth and rough, decayed and youthful, grand and subtle.<sup>115</sup> The picturesque might also be a way of incorporating classical references (including the pastoral) into homespun British nationalist landscapes and representations, and injecting them with new meanings.<sup>116</sup> In music, as in landscape and other arts, the picturesque was invoked aesthetically to justify fragmentation, sudden changes, and the self-conscious attempt of art to hide itself, revealing untamed “nature.”<sup>117</sup> Price considered Corelli’s *Pastorale* beautiful and some of Handel’s choruses sublime, but described more unpredictable music (whether its “wildness” was playful or more serious) as picturesque.<sup>118</sup>

Beyond mixing the beautiful and the sublime, the picturesque interacted with music in a less literal but perhaps more relevant way: by injecting a new historical awareness into landscape, and from there into the arts in general. The fascination of picturesque (or “proto-Romantic”) artists with Chinese gardens<sup>119</sup> and with placing ruins and rustic

<sup>114</sup> Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1967 [originally published 1927]), 4, and see 244–5. Walter J. Hippie, in *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1957), 189–90, goes along with this assessment to a point, though he sees the idea of a clear teleological progression from “Classical” to “Romantic” as a partial distortion, and one that belittles the “picturesque” as a transitory stage rather than a viable theory of aesthetics in its own right.

<sup>115</sup> See Hippie, *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque*, 202–23.

<sup>116</sup> On this aspect see Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscapes, Aesthetics, and Tourism in Britain, 1760–1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), esp. 4, 9, 11.

<sup>117</sup> For a consideration of musical representations of the picturesque, see Annette Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Richards gives many examples of the analogies between picturesque gardening (and the subsequent craze for English gardens in Germany) and the interest in the musical form of the fantasia, with its sudden twists and turns and its problematizing of rules in both nature and art.

<sup>118</sup> Richards, *Musical Picturesque*, 7. William Crotch also suggested that a style of music characterized by “playfulness of melody, broken and varied measure, intricacy of harmony and modulation, and a perpetual endeavor to excite surprise in the mind of the auditor” “is analogous to the Picturesque in Painting” (*Specimens of Various Styles of Music referred to in A Course of Lectures* [London: R. Birchall, c. 1807–15], 1: 2; and see ch. 2 of his *Substance of Several Courses of Lectures on Music, Read in the University of Oxford, and in the Metropolis* [London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1831]).

<sup>119</sup> Some of the ideas behind the new styles in landscape gardening were inspired by European visions of China – seen once again as a natural Other. See Arthur O. Lovejoy, “The Chinese Origin of a Romanticism,” in *Essays in the History of Ideas*, 99–135.

figures among their scenery, represents a new consciousness of time and evolution as part of any natural environment. In other words, picturesque art not only combined the sublime with the beautiful, but also, partly as a result, it incorporated the new idea of nature as primal or past human history *into* the older idea of nature as setting and surrounding.<sup>120</sup> Music could become a part of this landscape, incorporating the past within the present.

Certainly we can see this in the attitudes of tourists to the Highlands, who now came in droves in search of picturesque scenery. They incorporated their Ossianic historical fascination into their descriptions of the Highlands' many ruins and variegated landscapes – and into their descriptions of the music they heard there. The Scottish tour of William Gilpin, the man who first sought to turn the idea of "picturesque beauty" into a technical term capturing his ideal of landscape depiction, is a good example. Of the Highland herds, Gilpin says: "Here we have stronger ideas, than any other part of [Britain] presents, of that primaevael state, when man and beast were joint tenants of the plain. The highlander, and his cattle seem entirely to have this social connection . . . Nor are the cattle of this wild country more picturesque, than its human inhabitants."<sup>121</sup> Music could actually be painted into this vision of a historical landscape: Gilpin's references to the picturesque scenery of herring-fishing boats and the sunset around Loch Fyne in the Western Highlands are further "decorated" by his description of the sound of bagpipes in the air – or, on Sundays, the sound of Gaelic psalm-singing.<sup>122</sup>

The well-read Glaswegian Anne Grant, who published letters to friends she had written during her time moving about the Highlands, shows this same Ossian-influenced attention to history and antiquities as part of local color. (Grant married a Highland minister, learned Gaelic, and later wrote *Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders*.) In one letter, she describes hearing music coming from the kitchen while at a house in Luss in 1773. Her "Ossianic mania" awakened, she tiptoes in to spy "music both vocal and instrumental, but no such voice, no such instrument, had I ever heard." She finds a "dark-browed Highlander sitting double over the fire, and playing 'Macgrigor na Ruara' on two trumps [jaw harps] at once, while a nymph, half hidden amongst her heavy locks, was pacing backwards, turning a great wheel, and keeping time with

<sup>120</sup> See the observations of Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight cited in Hipple, *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque*, 207–8, 252–3, 264–5; and from a musician's angle, see Reichardt's and Beethoven's comments on the place of ruins as history within landscapes, cited in Richards, *Musical Picturesque*, 70, 213.

<sup>121</sup> William Gilpin, *Observations Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776 On Several Parts of Great Britain; Particularly the Highlands of Scotland*, 2 vols. (London: R. Blamire, 1789), 2: 135–6.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 183.

voice and steps to his mournful tones. I retired, not a little disconcerted, and dreamt all night of you and Malvina [an Ossianic character] by turns."<sup>123</sup> Even Grant's description of the music's setting as the "dark caverns of the kitchen" shows a visual and literary bent, mixing the fantastic and historical as tangible relics in the present. From this perception of music as part of a historical landscape,<sup>124</sup> it would be a short step to the full-blown Romantic fascination with the inherent mystery of fragments, aphorisms, and the misty historical past, freed from their ties with eighteenth-century strictures on "taste," and learned rules of art.

Because the picturesque grew out of traditional generic categories and because it took nature as its primary concern, it is no wonder that references to pastoral, even as a genre, continue to play a large role in picturesque or even later "Romantic" representations of Scotland. But at the same time, the central role of history and distance in the picturesque indicates how empty these pastoral references had often become of the essential defining features of older generic pastoral. Alexander Campbell's "A Conversation on Scottish [sic] Song," dating from 1798, is striking in this respect. Campbell wrote his piece in dialogue form, with the speakers serving the typical Enlightenment role of presenting information and facts in dialectic (a tried and true formula itself going back to classical antiquity); and the names he chose for his speakers, "Lycidas" and "Alexis," had impeccable pedigrees in pastoral. As herdsmen they recur consistently from Theocritus and Virgil through to Milton's "Lycidas" and to Pope's pastorals. The difference is that Campbell's Lycidas and Alexis do not speak as shepherds. Literary shepherds do not talk about the historical movement of Celtic tribes, or assert, as Campbell's Alexis does: "In a rude state of society, [passion and sentiment] would be expressed in artless musical intervals, such as correspond with the notes of singing-birds."<sup>125</sup> In other words, Campbell has clearly absorbed the view of nature presented in Ossian (Campbell devotes a good portion of the essay to rallying for the authenticity of Ossian; he will reappear in later chapters as one of the first Scottish "folk music" collectors and folk-musical theorists). So, while the names Campbell chose could not but have suggested pastoral in the traditional sense to his contemporary readers, this "pastoral" is

<sup>123</sup> Anne Grant, *Letters from the Mountains: Being the Real Correspondence of a Lady, Between the Years 1773 and 1807*, 2nd edn, 3 vols. (London: Luke Hansard and Sons, 1807), 1: 12–13.

<sup>124</sup> Other tours provide similar examples. In his *Observations Made in a Journey Through the Western Counties of Scotland in the Autumn of 1792*, 2 vols. (Perth: R. Morrison, Jr., 1793), Robert Heron, for instance, at several places on his tour, hears peasants singing and remarks on the relationship of their "ancient songs" to the landscape (see 2: 226, 2: 299, 1: 286, etc.).

<sup>125</sup> Campbell, "A Conversation on Scottish Song," in *Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Andrew Foulis, 1798), 1.

reduced to being a signal that nature will be a central topic. It is empty of any “inner” or “outer” generic markers beyond this preoccupation with nature – for “nature” itself has entirely shifted in connotations.

Isolated elements of pastoral, such as Campbell’s character names, continued to appear in some formulations of Scottish music (and many protagonists of my later chapters – especially James Beattie and Robert Burns – continued to use both the word “pastoral” and occasionally also conventional names and imagery). In some cases, more specific and traditional pastoral attitudes and conventions might also persist as pockets within a larger kaleidoscopic arena. (Musical signals long associated with pastoral could become topoi for example in later eighteenth-century music, but they now tended to appear fleetingly in works of broader scope, and their effect is more dependent on contrast; the emphasis is seldom any more on the message of the pastoral *per se*.<sup>126</sup>) At other times, the word “pastoral” was now used to mean, quite literally, anything dealing with shepherds and herds (often, this was applied to the Lowland way of life, contrasted to the Highland). Finally, in a more casual use of the word (meaning anything relating to nature), many picturesque tourists continued to refer to even the Highland way of life as “pastoral,” but they specifically envisioned this way of life as suspended in a dangerously disappearing and historicized milieu, a contrast to encroaching modernity.<sup>127</sup> As in Campbell’s writing, the word “pastoral” itself and various related generic signifiers continue to represent nature, but also as in Campbell’s writing, this is no longer the moral, rule-bound, timeless universe of generic pastoral, but the new nature characterized by unpredictability and occasional awe – notable for its historical separation from the present rather than its smooth continuity.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the “naïve” pastoral, involving unselfconscious participation in nature, was almost always framed as an object of interest from outside – and often as part of a picturesque

<sup>126</sup> This is the way Peter Schleuning treats the pastoral after mid-century in general (see *Die Sprache der Natur*, esp. 120, 133–6, and Part III). Michael Beckerman had also noted this process at work in Mozart. See his “Mozart’s Pastoral,” in *Mozart-Jahrbuch 1991: Bericht über den Internationalen Mozart-Kongress, Salzburg 1991*, ed. Rudolph Angermüller et al. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992), 93–102. Note that Hermann Jung uses the word “topos” quite differently in the title of his *Die Pastoral: Studien zur Geschichte eines musikalischen Topos*. Jung’s “Topos” is more like Alpers’s “mode” – a genre-grouping with inward and outward signals; in fact Jung ends his history just at 1750 when he sees the pastoral breaking down as a set of clearly defined genres for staged works, arias, instrumental movements, etc.

<sup>127</sup> When even Ossian was occasionally referred to as “pastoral,” it must be remembered that this word had such a long and dominant past that it might still be used occasionally to designate any work relating to nature. (In a 1763 poem mocking Macpherson, Charles Churchill called *Fingal* an “epic pastoral” [quoted from Stafford, *Sublime Savage*, 133]. Here the word takes this role, and is also perhaps used to deflate the pretended “Epic” nature of Ossian’s work.)

landscape. It became the object of the gaze of observers (musical, visual, or literary) who were aware of their distance from the natural world. Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper," produced after his own 1803 tour to the Highlands, exemplifies this:

Behold her, single in the field,  
Yon solitary Highland Lass!  
Reaping and singing by herself;  
Stop here, or gently pass!  
Alone she cuts, and binds the grain,  
And sings a solitary strain;  
O listen! for the Vale profound  
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt  
So sweetly to reposing bands  
Of Travellers in some shady haunt,  
Among Arabian sands:  
No sweeter voice was ever heard  
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,  
Breaking the silence of the seas  
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?  
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow  
For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago:  
Or is it some more humble lay,  
Familiar matter of today?  
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,  
That has been, and may be again!

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang  
As if her song could have no ending;  
I saw her singing at her work,  
And o'er the sickle bending;  
I listen'd till I had my fill:  
And, as I mounted up the hill,  
The music in my heart I bore,  
Long after it was heard no more.<sup>128</sup>

Alpers still considers this a version of pastoral, but altered.<sup>129</sup> For our purposes, the important thing is not that pastoral elements could

<sup>128</sup> Wordsworth, *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800–1807*, ed. Jared Curtis, The Cornell Wordsworth, general ed. Stephen Parrish (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 184–5.

<sup>129</sup> He cites the poem, *What is Pastoral?* 245–6. Alpers discusses Wordsworth as a transitional figure, familiar with his pastoral precedents, and often invoking them, but ultimately adding a Schillerian temporal element (278), and making pastoral

survive within a new context; it is the fundamental difference of that new context from older literary constructs. Picturesque and Romantic imaginations, rather than performing a trick in which the distance between “us” and the “natural” figures is closed with reference to universal laws, instead dwell increasingly self-consciously on that very distance in directly temporal language, or in geographical projections that had also come to suggest temporal stages. As Alpers puts it: “In Schiller’s terms, this [Wordsworth] is a sentimental poem about a naïve song.”<sup>130</sup> It is this sentimental distance that allows the reaper’s work-song here to take on the characteristics of “folk song,” representing purity as regarded by one who can only imagine and idealize that purity, never return to it.<sup>131</sup> The woman’s song has elements of the foreign for local color (note the mention of “Arabian sands” and the “farthest Hebrides” in the same breath, as evocations of the exotic/primitive/natural), but also a universal, transcendent appeal; it reconnects us temporarily to our own “natural” past. (Wordsworth may have taken the view that Ossian was a forgery, but he took its messages to heart.<sup>132</sup>) Thus would the “Romantic” artist come to turn to “the folk” for novelty and inspiration. The conception of “folk music” depended on this reorientation of “nature,” from ubiquitous moral guide (the form it takes in pastoral) to historicized emblem of lost innocence – nature as Other.

more a frame of reference that can be called up than a “definable literary kind” (285). He suggests that this was Wordsworth’s legacy in English-language poetry.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>131</sup> Dianne Dugaw (in “Francis Child, Cecil Sharp, and the Legacy of the Pastoral in Folksong Study,” *The Folklore Historian* 14 [1997], 7–12) has argued that the idealization of a peasant “Golden Age” in the work of Child and Sharp is indebted to the pastoral. While I agree with her characterizations of Sharp’s and Child’s work, it should be clear that I am arguing almost the opposite here in terms of her use of the word. The idea of the “folk” has more to do with the breakdown of pastoral conventions (and the adaptation of its “inner forms” to Romantic sentimentalism) than with the pastoral tradition as such.

<sup>132</sup> See Stafford, *Sublime Savage*, 173, 177.



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## Genius versus art in the creative process: “national” and “cultivated” music as categories, 1760–1800

Across the middle of the eighteenth century, musicians and aestheticians became increasingly infatuated with the creative faculty of the human mind, and their vocabulary and categorizations soon came to reflect this. This was the period in which the word “genius” – having originally designated a guardian spirit or essence rather than a creative power – came to signify primarily human inventive capabilities. By the late 1760s, more and more thinkers approached genius almost exclusively as a creative force;<sup>1</sup> and such fascination with human genius grew over the last part of the century with the decline of the mimetic conception of the arts. As attention turned away from music as imitation of a preexisting natural framework, the focus turned logically toward its human original creators and toward the individual works they produced. Indeed, M. H. Abrams frames his classic study of Romantic theory as a critical shift in metaphor from mind as mirror – that is, as reflective and mimetic of nature – to mind as lamp, as self-sufficient.<sup>2</sup> No longer were music’s (and the other arts’) effects on an audience attributed to successful imitation of natural rules – whether that imitation was direct or whether, as in Pope’s advice, it was mediated through ancient artistic models themselves built on nature. Genius was allied directly to nature, but nature in the new sense of primal human drives rather than the old sense of rule-bound environmental order. Genius made its own rules, it did not follow conventions.

<sup>1</sup> Some of Addison’s work had foreshadowed later ideas of original creative genius (see his discussion of creative genius in *The Spectator* [no. 160; quoted in *The Spectator*, ed. Bond, 2: 126–30]; also M. Abrams, *Mirror and the Lamp* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1953], 186–7).

<sup>2</sup> Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, esp. chs. 1–3. For a musical discussion see John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

Furthermore, as the century drew to a close, the concept of genius itself began to bifurcate: on the one hand there was the power of groups – ancient societies, nationalities, etc. – to create, and on the other hand the power of single, original, minds. In music, these would come respectively to represent the anonymous “folk genius” and the “genius” of the individual composer. The transition was not smooth or consistent: as long as “art” remained synonymous with artifice – with civilization – it was still set *against* natural, primal genius. Still, even before the contradiction between genius and art was resolved and the idea of individual composers as geniuses emerged more consistently at the close of the century, the attention to who created a work, why, and how, had added another obvious layer in the foundation of the folk and art music categories. “High” and “low” would finally begin to take on connotations primarily related to origins in music, rather than function.

Where my [first chapter](#) dealt with the initial interest in focusing on musical origins – in *geographical* terms – and my [second chapter](#) covered the spread of that interest to the specification of origins in *temporal* terms (within a teleological narrative of nature and progress), this chapter begins a consideration of the increasing attention to musical origins as a mental process.

### **The minstrels and bards of old**

As Downing Thomas and Matthew Head have traced in recent studies, the emergence of a more human conception of musical creation led to changing beliefs about music’s *Ur*-origins in the distant past: symbolic legends of the discovery or invention of music soon gave way to more “scientific” claims.<sup>3</sup> Reconceptions of the beginnings of shared “national” musical cultures paralleled this rethinking of the origins of music in general; and in the case of Scottish music, the new ideas specifically paved the way for the idea of folk traditions. So let us return to where we left off at the end of the [first chapter](#) and look more closely at the changing stories told about Scottish music’s beginnings.

The replacement of Rizzio with James I as symbolic father of the “Scottish style” had represented one mid-eighteenth-century trend: the new desire to claim musical artifacts as part of indigenous national culture. Now, further changes to the origin myth were necessary, as positing a single symbolic author for an entire national musical practice seemed increasingly fanciful in an era of attention to the workings of

<sup>3</sup> See Matthew Head, “Birdsong and the Origins of Music,” *JRMA* 122 (1997), 1–23; Thomas, *Music and the Origins*, esp. 34–56. In Head’s discussion note that Kant’s idea of “conjectural history” is slightly different from the way that the term has been applied to Scottish and other Enlightenment historiography.

different kinds of human minds, and different individual minds. Bodies of national song would have to be considered less as vague groupings and more as diverse assemblies of specific artifacts.

Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765),<sup>4</sup> which famously galvanized the British antiquarian frenzy, demonstrated an editorial approach in which such single works needed to be “authenticated” as artifacts, and dated as pieces of cultural property. In Percy's imagination, the single symbolic author of a style gives way to an entire class of creative minds: minstrels and bards. Percy claimed to be assembling “the select remains of our ancient English Bards and Minstrels, an order of men who were once greatly respected by our ancestors” (ix).<sup>5</sup> Percy devotes a prefatory essay (xv–xxiii) to expounding upon the high status (including often the high birth as well) of the ancient bards, and their “genuine successors” (xv) the Minstrels: he believed they were nobly employed in Britain at least until the end of the sixteenth century. Since Percy's “minstrels and bards” lived across several centuries, attributing these ancient songs to them did not contradict a careful consideration of the different provenance (and hence sub-categorization) of different pieces. Percy exhibits the picturesque historical outlook of the time by presenting his material in reconstructed chronological order based on the usual historiography of progress, and drawing attention to the “earliest” works because of their “pleasing simplicity,” “artless graces” (x), and “romantic wildness” (xxii) – which he argues should override our doubts about their uncouthness. In arranging his work this way, Percy inherently helped create the work-concept that became so dominant by the early nineteenth century. Each work and author might be considered within a narrative of “progress” away from picturesque “natural genius” and toward refined art.

In the 1760s and 1770s, this notion of bardic history provided the most common myth of origin for national poetry and music. Percy was English, but the same concerns entered into theories about Scottish music. Macpherson's “Ossian” poems had also been put forward as the work of an esteemed bardic class; in fact they served in many ways as the model for Percy.<sup>6</sup> Though Ossian himself was a more mythical and symbolic figure than Percy's “minstrels,” we find even in Macpherson's work – and certainly in the fraught discourse that followed Macpherson – that ballads and their like were coming to be seen as specific compositions

<sup>4</sup> Parenthetical citations in the [next section](#) of text refer to the first volume of this work.

<sup>5</sup> Even Percy's subtitle proclaims this: *Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and other Pieces of our Earlier Poets*.

<sup>6</sup> See Nick Groom, “Celts, Goths, and the Nature of the Literary Source,” in *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*, ed. Alvaro Ribeiro and James G. Basker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 274–96.

whose history needed to be explained in realistic ways in order to make politically expedient claims of origin. Lowland or unspecified “Scottish” music was discussed in similar terms too. William Tytler, discussed at the end of chapter one, had enthusiastically ascribed the Scottish *style* to James I. At the same time, his own writing betrays the fact that by the 1770s the notion of individual works as specific entities had become too pressing to consider too many Lowland Scottish songs as James’s own output. Instead, Tytler suggests that there were also others of “heaven-born genius” who contributed to the Scottish repertoire; these were the “itinerant or strolling minstrels, performers on the harp” to whom Tytler imagines “we are indebted for many fine old songs.”<sup>7</sup> Tytler even proceeds hypothetically – based on his evolutionary idea of musical style – to classify the most famous Scottish songs one by one into different historical periods, including a group of songs predating the innovations that Tytler ascribes to James.<sup>8</sup>

Almost all discussions of the origins of national music from the 1760s and 1770s enter into this new engagement with individual creative histories; yet they shared one key assumption that would soon make them, too, appear obsolete or incomplete: the whole Macpherson–Percy generation of antiquarian scholars – despite their pains to highlight the “primitive” nature of the eras they were writing about, and the “artlessness” of the products the olden minstrels created – still took for granted that the “genius of a nation” was best captured by the trained upper-class poets and composers of its past. These writers, often conservative politically, clung to a bardic theory of origin for the “national music” they championed partly because they had trouble coping with the rapid changes in society they were witnessing. They found their refuge by idealizing the past, represented by a feudal system of patronized bards; ascribing to the bards the cultural artifacts they considered most important was, in a sense, ascribing those artifacts to the stable and conservative society that produced the bards.<sup>9</sup> Thus, though Percy’s work has often been treated as an early collection of “folk” ballads,<sup>10</sup> it clearly comes from a mind and a time that did not yet

<sup>7</sup> Tytler, “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 221–2 and 222n.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 224–7, and see 197–8. Tytler gives little basis for his decisions about which songs to place in different categories, besides his ideas about evolving scales and “regularity.”

<sup>9</sup> For analyses of literary parallels to this phenomenon, see Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, 113–15, 121–3; and Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>10</sup> On the reception of this work as “folk,” see Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 5; also Heinrich Lohre, *Vom Percy zum Wunderhorn: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Volksliedforschung in Deutschland* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1902), 1–60, though Lohre is very much involved himself in trying to define and find the real “folk” elements in Percy.

distinguish between anonymous "low" and individual "artistic" creation – and that thus did not conceive of a real folk/art split.<sup>11</sup> If some of the poems in Percy's collection were "meerly [sic] written for the people" (ix), none were written merely *by* the people, so to speak, since Percy considered all of his contents to be the work of high-born and esteemed professionals, "who united the arts of Poetry and Music, and sung verses to the harp, of their own composing" (xv). Even if the names of the great bards and minstrels who wrote these ballads have often been lost in the years, the poems are not folk songs in the modern sense.

It would be another step before the liberal ideology of the collective will would dispossess both the high kings and their companions the bards and minstrels of their sole right to represent a nation's genius. "The people" would come to share a bid for this right. A scholar at the forefront of this shift, perhaps the best representative, was Joseph Ritson (1752–1808). Born in northern England (Stockton-on-Tees) to humble parents (his father became a farmer), Ritson spent most of his life in London, as "an antiquary and *litterateur*."<sup>12</sup> He was an eccentric character, anti-religious, who became a strict vegetarian at the age of nineteen, and also developed and used his own spelling system. Notably, he also tended toward very liberal political views. (He would later visit Paris during the Revolution, and endorse republicanism.<sup>13</sup>) From the outset, Ritson was often acerbic in his quest for accuracy, and demanded disinterested scholarly documentation on a level that his predecessors could not live up to, especially in his own eyes.

Percy became a favorite target. In essays on "National Song" and "Ancient English minstrels" prefaced to his own antiquary English song collections of the mid-1780s,<sup>14</sup> Ritson worked doggedly, almost with a sense of malicious disdain, to discredit Percy's flights of fancy and to knock the English minstrels off the pedestal that Percy had erected for them. He argued that the minstrels held in high esteem at the English courts after the Norman Conquests wrote and sang in French – many even *were* French.<sup>15</sup> He claimed that in English the word

<sup>11</sup> See Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, 112–14. <sup>12</sup> Baptie, *Musical Scotland*, 158.

<sup>13</sup> His life ended in a violent mental breakdown. These details are taken from Bertrand Bronson, *Joseph Ritson: Scholar-at-Arms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1938). On Ritson's life see also Harker, *Fakesong*, 16–18, 24–6, 30–1, 35, and the *Dictionary of National Biography* (48: 327–31).

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Ritson's *Select Collection of English Songs*, 3 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1783) was prefaced by "A Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song," which considered the history of song among different nations; and his "Observations on the Ancient English Minstrels" appeared in *Ancient Songs, From the Time of King Henry the Third, to the Revolution* (London: J. Johnson, 1792). Most of this latter book was in fact printed in 1786–7 (see Bronson, *Ritson*, 176).

<sup>15</sup> Ritson, *Select Collection* ("National Song"), 1: lii–liii; see also *Ancient Songs*, ii–iii.

"minstrel" had never referred to Percy's composer-singer-harpists, but rather to *any* instrumentalists, most of whom were considered rabble from a fairly early period and forever after.<sup>16</sup> He suggested that later print-ballad-writers were responsible for Percy's material, because the oldest "minstrel" songs would have been so primitive as to be "incapable of any certain melody or air."<sup>17</sup> Typically, Ritson argued by attacking Percy's scholarly methods directly. Percy had alleged that most of his material came from a manuscript, which, although "written in the middle of the last [i.e. seventeenth] century ... contains compositions of all times and dates, from the ages prior to Chaucer, to the conclusion of the reign of Charles I."<sup>18</sup> Ritson wondered on what grounds Percy made these claims: how could these early works, lost in the interim, be well preserved in a seventeenth-century manuscript? Ritson even doubted if the manuscript, which Percy supposedly rescued fortuitously as it was about to be thrown into a stove by servants, was real at all.<sup>19</sup> (The manuscript did in fact exist, as Percy was forced to prove by showing it around, though Ritson's doubts about Percy's dating and other claims were not refuted by this proof.) Drawing his own conclusions, Ritson averred that none of the poems in Percy's collection was older than the Elizabethan period.<sup>20</sup>

The upshot of Ritson's activity as scholarly gadfly was not a neat picture – rather a much messier one than Percy had drawn; yet the very messiness was what offered a potential new way to understand the "genius of a nation." Ostensibly dealing with the same set of antiquarian material as Percy, Ritson would not confine himself to suggesting that any anciently esteemed stratum of society was uniquely responsible. To understand the history and meaning of national song, one needed to consider not only Percy's high bards and minstrels, but *all* bards, minstrels, and print-ballad makers, many of them quite low. Ritson's liberal, if sometimes self-contradictory, rhetoric is summed up in statements such as this:

There is nothing, perhaps, from which the real character of a nation can be collected with so much certainty as the manners and diversions of the lower or

<sup>16</sup> Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, iv–xvi (in "Ancient English Minstrels").

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiii. In the "Dissertation on the Songs, Music, and Vocal and Instrumental Performance of the Ancient English" which follows (xxvii–lxxvi), Ritson in fact implies that there was barely any melody before the time of print ballads. Pointing out that we know even less about the music of this period than the songs (i.e. poems), Ritson suggests that, though there may have been some light dance tunes (xxxvi), the song tunes were "probably nothing more than the plain chant," or repeated tones "with no pretension to melody." No secular music from the time "such as may be supposed to have been in vogue among the common people" is known to be extant (xxxv).

<sup>18</sup> Percy, *Reliques*, ix. <sup>19</sup> Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, xix.

<sup>20</sup> Ritson, *Select Collection* ("National Song"), 1: lviii, and see also the "Preface" to the same volume, paginated separately, xi.

rather lowest classes of the inhabitants. The principal amusement of the common people of every country and in every age has been a turn for melody and song . . . The common people of Italy listen with rapture to the sublimest flights of Ariosto, whom they appear to comprehend as well as the ablest critic . . . The English vulgar have never, perhaps, shewn such a brilliancy of intellect, and therefor [*sic*] the compositions which they most relish are hardly to be endured by those of any other description.<sup>21</sup>

At one point Ritson goes so far as to suggest that common people outside of England even *composed* some songs. In particular, he cites Joseph Barretti's epistolary *Journey from London to Genoa, Through England, Portugal, Spain, and France* to show that, in Spain, the common people extemporize poetry regularly.<sup>22</sup>

Though he was among the first generation of European travelers and scholars to note song composition by the "vulgar" in a new antiquarian, picturesque context, Ritson in the 1780s still stopped short of casting the "common people" as the originators of "national song" as such. In his writings from this period, Ritson's attitude toward the masses seemed to fluctuate from instance to instance and country to country, as did his use of the word "vulgar," which often meant "vernacular," while at other times "widespread," and at others "lower class." Despite Ritson's politics, he often sounds scornful, and "vulgar" sometimes carries a negative connotation – for example when he writes that in Henry VI's reign, many songs were made "by anonymous and ignorant rimers, for the use of the vulgar," and most that have been preserved possess little merit.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ritson, *Select Collection* ("National Song"), 1: xx–lxxi.

<sup>22</sup> 2 vols. (London: T. Davies and L. Davis, 1770). In one letter (no. 49, 1: 329–41), Barretti describes his growing wonder at his discovery that a young "rustick" boy, his guide, can improvise poetry to the guitar, and that it seems almost all the townspeople of Toledo can do the same, without being able to read. Barretti becomes sure that the faculty of "singing extempore" does not belong to the Tuscan Italians alone, but also to the Spanish. Barretti is shocked that no traveler or native has considered this phenomenon worthy of note before him. This refers to poetic composition, not musical; and Barretti (336) implies that the tunes were preexistent. (See also 2: 101–2, on blind musicians in Madrid as being very skilled, and on the importance of observing the manners of the "vulgar" and "lower classes" to understand the character of a nation.) Ritson also cites Martin Sarmiento's *Memorias para la historia de la poesia y poetas españoles* (Madrid: D. Joachin Ibarra, 1775), to note that women compose melodies in Galicia. In Sarmiento's work, the opposition is made to men: "Además de esto, he observado que en Galicia las mugeres no solo son Poetisas, sino tambien Músicas naturales." After saying that in most other places the "coplas" (itself a term that soon began to imply "folk" poetry in Spanish) are addressed to women because men compose them and set them to music, Sarmiento continues: "En Galicia es al contrario. En la mayor parte de las coplas Gallegas, hablan las mugeres con los hombres; y es porque ellas son las que componen las coplas, sin artificio alguno; y ellas mismas inventan los tonos, ó ayres á que las han de cantar, sin tener idea del Arte Músico" (*Memorias*, 238). Ritson's mention of these writers is in *Select Collection* ("National Song"), 1: xxxiii.

<sup>23</sup> Ritson, *Select Collection* ("National Song"), 1: 1.



Clearly, songs produced by the “vulgar,” or even much of the music produced for them, were not the primary vein of “national song” that Ritson is concerned with in his own collection. And for some “national” traditions on the Continent, Ritson stuck even closer to Percy’s bardic theories, attributing for example French national song to the troubadours.<sup>24</sup> His discussion of Italian music makes this clearer. He belittles modern Italian opera as the “laboured efforts of the professed musician,” a typical post-Ossianic anti-artifice comment. But, again typical of his generation, he derides these “professed musicians” not in order to exalt the “folk” (shepherds, peasants, etc.) but to praise Dante and Lorenzo de Medici, poets who wrote lyric songs and combined their art with music, as the bards did.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, even if Ritson’s writings of the 1780s did not move fully away from a focus on professional bards, he did demystify these bards. He opened up a massive avenue by suggesting that *all* the music a nation produces, which represents its home-grown culture, might be considered part of the “national” heritage. At this point he did not follow through by allowing the “the people” to be the ingenious creators, or even the principal purveyors, of “national music.” But this too was about to change; and once again Scotland would be the focus.

### **James Beattie and a new myth of origin: “national music” and the “people”**

James Beattie, professor of moral philosophy and logic at Marischal college in Aberdeen, was a liberal, tolerant and yet deeply religious thinker. As a philosopher he rejected what he saw as the dangerous pitfalls of Hume’s skepticism, yet he maintained an open mind and a friendship with Kames and other thinkers whose theories challenged scriptural outlook.<sup>26</sup> He wrote the most spirited assertion of racial equality I have seen from the Enlightenment period, arguing eloquently for nurture over nature and decrying slavery.<sup>27</sup> Like other Scottish philosophers of the “common sense” school, Beattie felt that truth was perceived “by an instantaneous and instinctive impulse” derived “from nature” and “acting in a similar manner upon all mankind.”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: xix–xx.      <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: xv–xvii.

<sup>26</sup> Details of Beattie’s life can be found in Everard H. King, *James Beattie* (Boston: Twayne/G. K. Hall & Co., 1977) and in an early biography in letter form: Sir William Forbes, *An Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie, LL.D.*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., and William Creech, 1806), also reprinted in *The Works of James Beattie*, 10 vols. (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1996), vols. 1–2. See also Roger J. Robinson’s Introduction in this reprinted version; and the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>27</sup> This appeared in Beattie’s very widely read *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*; see the excerpt in Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment*, 34–7. On Beattie’s aversion to slavery and work on behalf of abolition, see also King, *Beattie*, 31–2.

<sup>28</sup> This is from the *Essay on Truth*, quoted in King, *Beattie*, 39.

As a poet and aesthetician, his background led him to mix a deep respect for reason, taste, and morality with a vivid imagination and a strong historical awareness in landscape and literature.

At university in Aberdeen, Beattie was a student of Alexander Gerard, who would later write a famous tract on genius, but Beattie also developed his own ways of applying the concept. Beattie's poem "The Minstrel: Or, The Progress of Genius," written in 1768 and published in 1779, has been considered a harbinger of Wordsworthian Romanticism; and like Wordsworth, Beattie approaches the pastoral in a new light. The main character, Edwin, is the son of

A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;  
Whose sires, perchance, in Fairy land might dwell,  
Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;  
But he, I ween, was of the north countrie: [Beattie's own footnote  
suggests this means anywhere north of the River Trent]  
A nation famed for song, and beauty's charms . . .  
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.<sup>29</sup>

Edwin goes forth in the world, at first innocent and solitary, till he learns of the terrible corruption of courtly and civilized life. He is initially horribly scarred by the ideas of greed, tyranny, and dissembling; but he eventually takes this wisdom on board, coming to accept the world as a balance – and to see the great merits in reason and human striving for progress, despite their inevitable downside. Beattie here emerges as a forerunner of Schiller: Edwin loses his own childhood innocence (goes from "naïve" to "sentimental" quite literally), and, as the poem's subtitle ("The Progress of Genius") hints, Edwin is also obviously meant to stand allegorically for all humanity's course.<sup>30</sup> The descriptive imagery in the poem draws heavily on the Ossianic sublime, and on the picturesque contrasts of the Scottish landscape. Throughout, Beattie's ambivalence toward modernity and his freedom from some of the dogmas of his time result in a work that seems to shift between magical realms (including both the sublime, bardic world *and* the Arcadian pastoral Golden Age) and the incursion of the "real world." This imaginative slippage in Beattie's vision of "Scotia," which also characterizes the description of Scotland in his essay "On Poetry and Music, as they Affect the Mind,"<sup>31</sup> perhaps helps to explain why, in

<sup>29</sup> James Beattie, "The Minstrel; Or, The Progress of Genius: A Poem in Two Books," in *The Minstrel, in Two Books, With Some Other Poems* (London and Edinburgh: Edward and Charles Dilly, W. Creech, 1779), 6 (book 1, stanza XI).

<sup>30</sup> As King notes, the poem seems also to investigate the development of Beattie's own mind (Beattie, 91).

<sup>31</sup> First published in James Beattie, *Essays* (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1776). Parenthetical citations in the following four paragraphs refer to this edition.

that essay, he was the author of a tremendously powerful new origin myth for Scottish music.

"On Poetry and Music" actually suggests different origins for Highland and Lowland music, because, for Beattie, the Highlands and Lowlands are two different "countries," with different "peoples." Beattie's inclination to favor nurture in the anthropological debate does not preclude him from seeing national characteristics in fairly essentialist terms; he treats most aspects of culture as embedded almost from infancy.<sup>32</sup> He describes the Highlands as "a picturesque, but in general a melancholy country" (479), and when he asks "What then would it be reasonable to expect from the fanciful tribe, from the musicians and poets, of such a region?" (482), he answers himself: "The wildest irregularity appears in [their music's] composition. The expression is warlike, and melancholy, and approaches even to the terrible" (483). The Lowlands, meanwhile, "present a very different prospect. Smooth and lofty hills covered with verdure; clear streams winding through long and beautiful vallies; trees produced without culture . . . render them fit for pasturage, and favourable to romantic leisure and tender passions" (483). Beattie notes that many "old Scotch songs" take their names from specific places in this landscape – which may be called the "Arcadia of Scotland" – and express "emotions suited to the tranquillity of pastoral life" (483).

Thus, whereas Beattie seems tacitly to accept that Highland music stems originally from Ossian and other bardic narrators of sublimity and warfare (483), the famous Lowland songs are a different matter altogether:

It is a common opinion, that these songs were composed by David Rizzio, a musician from Italy, the unfortunate favorite of a very unfortunate queen. But this must be a mistake. The style of the Scotch music was fixed before his time; for many of the best of these tunes are ascribed by tradition to a more remote period. And it is not to be supposed, that he, a foreigner, and in the latter part of his life as man of business, could have acquired or invented a style of musical composition so different in every respect from that to which he had been accustomed in his own country. *Melody* is so much the characteristic of the Scotch tunes, that I doubt whether even basses were set to them before the present century; whereas, in the days of Rizzio, *Harmony* was the fashionable study of the Italian composers. (483–4)

<sup>32</sup> Following several pages in which Beattie discusses how many of our emotional reactions to music are formed by association, including national preferences (463–4, 473–5), Beattie states: "There is a certain style of melody peculiar to each musical country, which the people of that country are apt to prefer to every other style. That they should prefer their own, is not surprising; and that the melody of one people should differ from that of another, is not more surprising, perhaps, than that the language of one people should differ from that of another" (475–6).

So far Beattie sounds much like Tytler, Gregory, and the other post-Ossianic writers considered in Chapter 2. (Like them, Beattie goes on to take Palestrina to task for neglecting melody, and to doubt whether even a more recent foreigner can really imitate the style of Scottish melody.) But Beattie soon takes a new tack, for he also gives little credence to the symbolic authorship of James I:

To all this we may add, that Tassoni . . . speaks of this music as well esteemed by the Italians of his time, and ascribes the invention of it to James King of Scotland . . . But though I admit Tassoni’s testimony as a proof, that the Scottish music is more ancient than Rizzio, I do not think him right in what he says of its inventor. Nor can I acquiesce in the opinion of those who give the honour of this invention to the monks of Melrose.<sup>33</sup> I rather believe, that it took its rise among men who were real shepherds, and who actually felt the sentiments and affections, whereof it is so expressive. (484–5)

Soon afterward, Beattie breaks off his discussion of Scottish music, moving on to Italian; but the remarkable assertion is left clearly standing.

And the assertion really is remarkable. Beattie was not the first to mention the possibility that there might be compositions by uneducated people. Obviously, from Greek and Roman times, there was a pastoral tradition of shepherd composition – but then these pastoral songsters were magical sorts of figures, and origins had not been the main issue in generic pastoral in any case.<sup>34</sup> In Beattie’s own generation,

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of this ascription, see Nelson, “Scotland in London’s Musical Life,” 84–6.

<sup>34</sup> Consider two earlier eighteenth-century descriptions of pastoral that do mention peasant composition. First, Abbé Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, *Critical Reflections of Poetry, Painting and Music: With an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Theatrical Entertainments of the Ancients*, trans. Thomas Nugent, 3 vols. (London: John Nourse, 1748 [French original 1719]). In a chapter called “Some Remarks on Pastoral Poetry, and on the Shepherds of Eclogues,” Du Bos recommends that the characters in pastorals be drawn realistically from those in “our own fields” (1: 144). Though “our shepherds and peasants” are too “coarse and clownish” to be used as models, other figures, such as a young prince lost in the countryside, can be the subject of an idyll (1: 144–5). Du Bos rails against idealizing current peasants as characters; they suffer all day in fact, whereas in Virgil’s day most were slaves and therefore happier [!] because their needs were tended to by kindly masters (1: 145–7). Even in “our times,” shepherds in Italy are happier than in France, and “The country fellows of some parts of Italy not only tend their flocks, but even go out to the plough with a guitar on their back. They likewise know how to sing the amours in extempore verses, which they accompany with the sound of their instruments. These they touch, if not with delicacy, at least with exactness; which they call *improvisare*” (1: 147). But this note is passed over, and the discussion quickly moves back to what sentiments are appropriate in portraying shepherds, with Du Bos claiming that it is ridiculous to place too many artful sentiments in “our” peasants’ mouths; this makes the resultant pastoral seem forced and insipid (1: 148). A mid-century text that shows some shift toward emphasis on origins – by specifically distinguishing pastoral songs about or imitating shepherds from pastoral songs by or of shepherds – is reproduced in Friedrich von Hagedorn’s *Oden und Lieder in fünf Büchen* (Hamburg: Johan Carl Bohn, 1747); Hagedorn’s work contains “Abhandlungen von den Liedern der alten

Ritson and a few other European writers were newly noticing “vulgar” composition, and even Percy had noted that “It is a received tradition in Scotland, that at the time of the Reformation, ridiculous and bawdy songs were composed by the rabble to the tunes of the most favourite hymns in the Latin service.”<sup>35</sup> But Beattie was among the first to address music specifically where others were discussing words. More importantly and uniquely, he was the first to assign real value to these compositions; to consider that they might be the backbone of a nation’s representative music, rather than an addendum to such music, or a forum below discussion at all. The fact that Beattie considers Highland “national music” as the legacy of the bards and Lowland “national music” as the creation of untutored shepherds inherently puts these shepherds on the same level as those bards: *both* are creators of national cultural capital; *both* represent the collective. Where Ritson had checked his swing, Beattie carried through – suggesting that the music of a lower stratum within a “civilized” society (in this case Lowland Scotland) might itself stand as *the* “national” culture.

Although the primary subject of his essay *On Poetry and Music* is not explicitly genius, Beattie is never far from the subject so prevalent in “The Minstrel.” Rousseau’s idea of genius as the power to transcend mechanical rules is implicitly central here. Beattie writes:

A man who has made music the study of his life, and is well acquainted with all the best examples of style and expression that are to be found in the works of former masters, may, by memory and much practice, attain a sort of mechanical dexterity in contriving music suitable to any given passion; but such music would, I presume, be vulgar and spiritless, compared to what an artist of genius throws out, when under the power of an ardent emotion. It is recorded of Lulli, that, once when his imagination was all on fire with some verses descriptive of terrible ideas, which he had been reading in a French tragedy, he ran to his harpsichord and struck off such a combination of sounds, that the company felt their hair stand on end with horror. (478–9)

Griechen” (apparently translated from an obscure French original by Louis Jouard de la Nauze [1696–1773]). In the second “Abhandlung,” on Greek work-songs in general, the author distinguishes between “two different types of shepherd songs: those they sing [*singen*] themselves, and those made in imitation of their songs” (254). Songs placed by *Theocritus* in shepherd mouths are not considered proper “Lieder,” since they are actually part of “rechten Werken der Dichtkunst” (255). Certainly, this is an important precursor to work such as Beattie’s; however, lest this appear too facetiously as the same distinction that would later be drawn between folk and art, note first that in the entire “Abhandlung” on work-songs, the difference between who uses songs and who creates them is often left unaddressed (“singen” can be ambiguous in this sense); and in the specific context of shepherds, the essay proceeds to credit (based on accounts of Athenäus and Epicharmus) the Sicilian shepherd Diomus with the “invention” of bucolic shepherd song (255). A mythic symbolic author still keeps this account separate from the later idea of “folk” music.

<sup>35</sup> Percy, *Reliques*, 2: 110.

Many of Beattie's terms as such were not unique, yet his orientation toward this aesthetic outlook combined more than in the work of earlier authors with his egalitarian belief that all humans are created equal and share the same potential. He could thus carry through by extending the idea of genius not just to a feudal "natural" past state of society as many other writers were doing, but more explicitly to anonymous low-born composers. Notably, the passage above comes in the context of Beattie's discussion of national music, and is used to support the idea that "national ears," used to different habitual emotions, will create unique national music, including that produced by shepherds. Addison's "genius of the people," an early cultural-nationalist characterization, widens in Beattie's work into a creative force as well: what would later be termed a "folk genius."

Possibly it is relevant that Beattie himself was the son of a tenant farmer, if a literate one; but at least as important is the fact that once the human mind is conceived of as a lamp rather than a mimetic mirror, music becomes less rule-bound and less influenced by training; and a logical extension is that any mind may connect directly to natural (as human primal) impulses and partake in this mysterious creative ability. Certainly, then, it is no accident that Beattie's new theory of origin appears in the same essay with one of the strongest early refutations of the conventional mimetic basis of music. To argue against music as imitation of nature (as environment, in the old sense), Beattie chooses the pastoral as his example – which is particularly telling in light of his discussion of Scottish national music:

One of the most affecting styles in music is the *Pastoral*. Some airs put us in mind of the country, of "rural sights and rural sounds," and dispose the heart to that cheerful [*sic*] tranquillity, that pleasing melancholy, that 'vernal delight,' which groves and streams, flocks and herds, hills and vallies [*sic*], inspire. But of what are these pastoral airs imitative? Is it the murmur of waters, the warbling of groves, the lowing of herds, the bleating of flocks, or the echo of vales and mountains? Many airs are pastoral which imitate none of these things. What then do they imitate? – the songs of ploughmen, milkmaids, and shepherds? Yes: they are such, as we think we have heard, or might have heard, sung by the inhabitants of the country. Then they must *resemble* country-songs; and if so, these songs must also be in the pastoral style. Of what then are these country songs, the supposed archetypes of pastoral music, imitative? Is it of other country-songs? This shifts the difficulty a step backward, but does not take it away . . . In a word, an air may be pastoral, and in the highest degree pleasing, which imitates neither sound nor motion, nor any thing else whatever.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Beattie, *Essays*, 451–2. See also pp. 453–8 for broad claims about music's limited ability to imitate nature.



In the end, Beattie does not move fully away from the idea that music can imitate something; he grants that it can imitate other music and dance movements<sup>37</sup> (as Charles Avison granted, and as Beattie's own countryman Adam Smith would later grant, alongside even the more famous refuter of mimesis in music, Michel-Paul-Guy de Chabanon<sup>38</sup>). Nor does Beattie place the poet-artist consistently center stage and ignore the pragmatic side of art; rather, he remains faithful to "taste" and moral instruction as guiding principles in music, standing firmly rooted in the ideas of his time. Yet his rejection of imitation stands apart:<sup>39</sup> more than Avison, Kames, James Harris, and others who had qualified the limits of musical imitation (and certainly more than Rousseau despite the latter's emphasis on genius), Beattie seems prepared to consider that music may create its meaning, at least to a large extent, from its own "universal" qualities. Musical sense, like other aspects of common sense for Beattie, is shared by all humans;<sup>40</sup> and the "universal" qualities of music extend beyond perception to creation as well, indeed are particularly important in composition.<sup>41</sup> Beattie believes that music must spring from within the human mind, and he carries this idea logically further: if musical creativity is a quality of the human mind via common passions and sensibilities, it might spring from any mind. This is an idea that would gain tremendous force.

<sup>37</sup> See also *ibid.*, 444.

<sup>38</sup> For Smith's consideration on whether music was imitative, see his "On the Nature of that Imitation Which Takes Place in What Are Called the Imitative Arts." The essay was published only posthumously in 1795 (in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* [London: T. Cadell, Jr., and W. Davies, 1795]). Chabanon's famous work was *De la musique considérée en elle-même et dans ses rapports avec la parole, les langues, la poésie et le théâtre* (Paris: Chez Pissot, 1785).

<sup>39</sup> Abrams considers Beattie as still representative of a neo-classical pragmatic stage of art rather than a new "Romantic" stage (*Mirror and the Lamp*, 18, 29). Likewise, John Neubauer considers Beattie's rhetoric about imitation to be empty in the end, since his "expression" must ultimately fall back on representational ideas (*Emancipation of Music*, 154). But this is part of Neubauer's general argument that in many forms "expression" is a subset of imitation. Given the context of Beattie's remarks, I am inclined to consider his language more meaningful than Abrams and Neubauer do.

<sup>40</sup> See *Essays*, 459–60, for example, where Beattie questions Rousseau's idea that our ears could be adapted to other systems of harmony, since to a large extent our harmonic sense, part of what Beattie calls our "natural sensibility" in musical hearing, is universal.

<sup>41</sup> Beattie's ideas about universalism in *perception* are more contradictory. He stops well short of the later German claims for music's universality, because he insists that instrumental music has no set meaning, making it inferior to vocal music (*Essays*, 463–6), and also that much music has a power over us that is based on our memory of hearing it in our youth (and here he cites Rousseau's discussion of the Swiss *Ranz des vaches* [*Essays*, 475]). Indeed his entire discussion of "national music" is based on the idea that different nations have particular styles. It seems the idea of musical creation and the idea of musical perception were issues that Beattie held apart in his head, and it was in the former domain that his ideas were most novel.



### **Revolution: Beattie’s influence**

According to Beattie’s own subtitle, his essay was written in 1762 – and thus it was partly contemporary with works such as Gregory’s and Brown’s, though it may have been significantly altered before it was first published,<sup>42</sup> in quarto by subscription in 1776. Even in its published form, the essay is contemporary with Kames’s *Sketches* and Hawkins’s *General History*, and predates Tytler in its acknowledgement of Tassoni’s claims about James I. Since Beattie’s work came at the same time or before stories about James I and the bards as symbolic founders of Scottish music, it may not seem academically honest to present his theory of origins too conveniently as the “next” phase of a developing story. But in truth it is fair to do so. Though the essay was widely read, and republished in numerous octavo editions from the first year of its appearance, Beattie’s interest in proposing a kind of low-class authorship that departed from received models did not resonate immediately with other writers. For Tytler, Gregory, Brown, and others in their generation, genius might flourish best in primitive societies, but it still required patronage and tutelage, and they stuck to the bards rather than following Beattie by allowing a whole body of national music to be the product of the people – or the “folk” as they would come to be called.

By the 1780s, at least one Scottish writer cited Beattie and put forward similar claims in print;<sup>43</sup> but Beattie’s more widespread influence was really galvanized by the political fallout from the French Revolution. Scholars suddenly became much more attentive to a theory such as Beattie’s, which now seemed a logical combination of political liberalism or radicalism with the anthropological awareness that had been permeating European thought at all levels. The most important figure spreading the new origin theory in writing was again Joseph Ritson.

<sup>42</sup> See the Introduction by Roger J. Robinson to *The Works of James Beattie*, 4: v–viii.

<sup>43</sup> This was John Pinkerton. See his *Select Scottish Ballads, Volume 2: Containing Ballads of the Comic Kind* (London: J. Nichols, 1783), xxiv–xxx, esp. xxix–xxx. Though Pinkerton praises Beattie’s essay in closely related contexts (for example to refute the Rizzio theory, see xxxvii–xxxviii), at the actual moment when Pinkerton comes to discuss peasant origins, he gives a similar theory but invokes other sources: “A very celebrated and intelligent physician, who was born, and passed his early years in the south of Scotland, informs me, that it is his opinion, that the best of the ancient Scottish airs were really composed by shepherds. In his remembrance there was, in almost every village of that district, a chief shepherd, who had acquired celebrity by composing better songs than others of the same profession. And he thinks that though the best airs are in general known, yet the words to at least one half have never been published . . . I believe not above half a dozen of these genuine Scottish pastoral ballads [written quite recently] are in print; and suspect all such may be found in this volume. They have certain strokes in them which, in my opinion, could only occur to real shepherds. Such are *The yellow-hair’d laddie*, *Ewbuchts Marion*, *In Summer I maw’d my meadow*, &c.” Interestingly, Harker (*Fakesong*, 23–4) paints Pinkerton as entirely elitist, ignoring this aspect of the dynamic in his work.

Between his essay on “National Song” in 1783 and his two-volume 1794 collection *Scotish [sic] Songs*,<sup>44</sup> Ritson had – in 1791 during the Revolution – officially declared himself a republican.<sup>45</sup> The “Historical Essay on Scottish Song,” prefaced to Ritson’s 1794 collection, reflects this. Indeed Ritson’s turn toward the study of Scotland at this point seems itself to have been dictated by the fact that, whereas he saw the English songs as “more art than nature” (lxxviii), the Scottish songs had the advantages of “the beautiful peasant, in her homespun russet” over “the fine town lady, patched, powdered, and dressed out . . . in all the frippery of fashion” (lxxix). In his new study of Scottish music, Ritson remains a contrarian stickler for minute details and accuracy, but he seems more consistent and assured in his good will toward the common people. Now the productions of the professionals are actually dismissed, on terms that are new and striking:

One cannot . . . adduce the performance [i.e. composition; Ritson like many contemporaries often uses the word in this sense] of scholars and distinguished individuals, as specimens of national song. The genuine and peculiar song of Scotland, is to be sought, not in the works of Hamilton, Thomson, Smollett, or even [Allan] Ramsay, but in the productions of obscure or anonymous authors, of shepherds and milk-maids, who actually felt the sensations they describe; of those, in short, who were destitute of all the advantages of science and education, and perhaps incapable of committing the pure inspirations of nature to writing. (lxxix)

Ritson wrote this passage primarily in the context of the poetry, but his essay on “Scottish song” runs over a hundred pages, and soon turns from poetry to consider melody as well.

The musical portion of Ritson’s text, one of the most important eighteenth-century writings on Scottish music, is of course preoccupied with the “origin of the Scottish music” (lxxxvii) – and Ritson now includes in this search both questions of geography and more recent issues surrounding the specific creation of works. Ritson considers first whether the Scottish airs came from Ireland or vice versa. Being neither Irish nor Scottish, he is less passionate than many in endorsing either side of the issue, but he does conclude that the Highland airs probably owe their style to Ireland, and have little to do with the Lowland airs. As for these Lowland airs, Ritson makes clear his familiarity with Beattie’s writing, and expresses his admiration of Beattie’s theory about their origin (xc, n. 85). Ritson also adds his own embellishment, echoing his earlier assertions about the words, but now addressing the music: “many, if not most” of the Lowland “Scottish melodies . . . have actually

<sup>44</sup> London: J. Johnson, 1794. Parenthetical citations in the following portion of the text refer to volume 1 of this set.

<sup>45</sup> On Ritson and the Revolution, see Bronson, *Ritson*, 143–71.

been composed by natives of the Lowlands ... by shepherds tending their flocks, or by maids milking their ewes; by persons, in short, altogether uncultivated, or, if one may be allowed the expression, uncorrupted by art, and influenced only by the dictates of pure and simple nature” (xc).<sup>46</sup> Ritson also dismisses specifically the idea that James I may have been the “inventor” of Scottish national music, because James’s compositions would have been “mere art” instead of “pure nature” (xcvii).

Ritson not only used stronger and surer language than Beattie had in support of untutored creation for Lowland music, but extended a similar model to the *Highlands*, and beyond. Rejecting the authenticity of Ossian left him room for his own theories about the origins of Highland music, and he cited a manuscript he had seen in order to assert that Highland peasants also composed their own music (xxiv, in note). Since in many people’s minds, Scotland was now one nation (due to the efforts of Ramsay and his like), ideas could blur across all of Scotland in many cases, creating a much more abstract “folk.” A Highland tour published by John Lanne Buchanan in the year before Ritson’s collection had in fact noted “vulgar” composition even in the Western Isles – former stronghold of the bards – and Ritson also cited Buchanan to support his views about peasant composition (xxiv, in note).<sup>47</sup> Thus, even if for Ritson the geographic and ethnic origins of

<sup>46</sup> Ritson also cites lines from Allan Ramsay’s “Elegy on Patie Birnie” that mention a composition of Birnie’s own, in order to prove that “fiddlers” might compose tunes (lxxix). This is putting a new spin on Ramsay, who had himself, as we have seen, never inquired into the origin of tunes in assembling his national music, aside from trying to make sure that they represented a united “Scotland” (see ch. 1). Criticism of Ramsay for his lack of interest in purity and authenticity began at precisely this moment: it is almost certainly not coincidental that Ritson and Pinkerton (despite their own differences), being the first two collectors of Scottish music strongly to assert a peasant origin for their material, were also the earliest harsh critics of Ramsay’s editorial policy – his mixing of what would come to be called “folk” material with his own (see Pinkerton, *Select Scottish Ballads*, xxvii–xxviii; Ritson, *Scottish Songs*, lxiv–lxv).

<sup>47</sup> Buchanan visited the Hebrides in the 1780s, and wrote in 1793, using heavily picturesque terminology, and noting that composers might be anyone: “in these compositions, one meets with the most soft and tender strains of feeling affection, that melt the soul with heart-felt sensibility and love, along with the most moving dirges and lamentations for their lost sweet-hearts and friends; and the whole composed by the vulgar, no less than by the most refined” (*Travels in the Western Hebrides: from 1782 to 1790* [London: G. G. J. and J. Robinson and J. Debreit, 1793], 80). While “performance” often stood to mean “composition” in the eighteenth century, the opposite was not true; composition here almost certainly means much the same thing we would mean by it, though it may have more improvisational overtones. It is worth comparing the language used by Buchanan to an earlier piece of writing that at first glance seems akin to, and certainly foreshadows, many Enlightenment preoccupations. In 1703 Martin Martin, himself a native of Skye, published his *Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* (London: Andrew Bell, 1703). Martin notes of the people of Skye: “They are generally a very Sagacious People, quick of Apprehension, and even the Vulgar exceed all those of their Rank, and Education, I ever yet saw in any other Country. They have a great Genius for Musick and Mechanicks. I have observed several of their Children, that before they could speak, were capable to distinguish

Highland and Lowland airs were separate, both seemed to come from low-born representatives of the people. Furthermore, while it was specifically Scotland that had attracted Ritson in the wake of the Revolution – because its music seemed best to represent the “people” – he ultimately used his conclusions to broaden his scope beyond Scotland altogether. In a footnote discussing Beattie’s explanation of origin, Ritson hints that “nature and indolence” will produce similar music “in very distant and different countries” (xc–xci, in note).

By the end of the eighteenth century, the “vulgar” were really coming into their own. In the wake of the French Revolution, there was increasing liberal unrest in Britain, countered with rising reactionary demonstrations, literature, and harsh laws against “sedition.” Tom Paine’s “Rights of Man” circulated widely in 1792 and was banned, after which it remained in illegal distribution. Some of the political volatility was specifically centered north of the Scottish border as well: 1793 had seen the General Convention in Scotland of “The Friends of the People,” a society clearly carrying the French revolutionary ideals to the north.<sup>48</sup> Ritson’s landmark collection of Scottish songs appeared the next year, and while Ritson himself was personally invested in radical political thought, *any* musician or writer on Scottish (or any other) music from this time – *whatever* political orientation he took – could no longer ignore new political ideas, and their attendant musical theories.<sup>49</sup> Recognizing the existence of the political folk or “people” seemed to demand recognizing the presence of the musical folk or “people.”

Thus, Beattie’s theory of origin, especially after being embraced by Ritson, began to spread quickly – through figures as influential as

and make choice of one Tune before another upon the Violin, for they appear’d always uneasy until the Tune which they fancied best was play’d, and then they express’d their satisfaction by the motion of the Head and Hands. There are several of ‘em, who Invent Tunes very taking in the *South of Scotland*, and elsewhere; some Musicians have endeavoured to pass for first Inventers of them by changing their Name, but this has been Impracticable, for whatever Language gives the Modern Name, the Tune still continues to speak its true Original, and of this I have been shew’d several Instances” (199–200). Martin’s primary purpose here is to point out that the Highland and Lowland airs betrayed their geographic origins. Though this is an early example of the recognition of national cultural characteristics, Martin does not really distinguish – certainly he does not emphasize – who the composers he mentions are: he discusses the “vulgar” only as part of the whole of the population, which is characterized by wisdom and ability for music and mechanics. Nor did Martin, despite his belief that the Hebridean islanders existed in a “Golden Age,” betray the sense of “nature” as history and destiny that is evident in later writings (see Chapter 2, n. 65). Ritson (*Scottish Songs*, 1: xxiv, in note, etc.) and others cite Martin’s writings, but adding a new spin for their own use.

<sup>48</sup> See the *Minutes of the General Convention of the Friends of the People in Scotland . . . 30th April, 1st and 2nd May, 1793* (Edinburgh: J. Robertson, 1793).

<sup>49</sup> On the recognition and use of the political power of song within France during the Revolution, see Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787–1799* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996).

Robert Burns. Beattie himself had already influenced song-collecting ventures of the late 1780s and 1790s on a practical level: first, he was involved at the start of James Johnson's project to collect *The Scots Musical Museum* in 1787;<sup>50</sup> then, when George Thomson was working with Burns to assemble the massive *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* (1793–1841),<sup>51</sup> the two men planned to get Beattie to expand his writing on “national music” into a preface for the collection. Burns wrote to Thomson at the time: “Dr. Beattie's essay will of itself be a treasure – on my part, I plan to draw up an appendix [containing annotations on the airs and songs] to the Dr.'s essay.”<sup>52</sup> Ritson, Burns's fellow sympathizer with the French Revolution, impressed the poet equally: Burns believed the 1794 “Historical Essay” on Scottish music “nearly preoccupied the ground, & to much better purpose, on which I was to have built my system. All that is left for me is, a few anecdotes & miscellaneous remarks.”<sup>53</sup> When Thomson's collection was actually published, it had only a preface by Thomson himself, but that preface ended up summarizing the path that Scottish music had symbolically traveled. Thomson reviewed some earlier theories about the origins of Scottish music – Rizzio, James I, minstrels, and so forth – and then he presented as the latest theory that of Ritson and Beattie: that the Scottish music “took its rise among real Shepherds” especially around the River Tweed.<sup>54</sup> It had taken a good thirty years for the new myth of origin to bring “national” music closer to our more familiar idea of folk music.

### **“National” versus “cultivated” music as predecessors to “folk” and “art” music**

Conceiving “national music” had of course relied inherently on the idea of national identity discussed in Chapter 1. From the start of such

<sup>50</sup> James Johnson, *The Scots Musical Museum*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: James Johnson, [1787–1803]).

<sup>51</sup> George Thomson, ed., *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice: with Introductory and Concluding Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Pianoforte, Violin and Violoncello*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: George Thomson, 1793–1841). Thomson's mission was to enlist poets (primarily Burns) to create new words, and the most famous continental musicians (Playel, Kozeluch, Haydn, Beethoven, Weber, and Hummel) to create settings, in order to present national melodies in a form in which they would appeal as bourgeois parlor music; he will be discussed further in later chapters. Because of the many changing forms of this work, various editions will be cited specifically.

<sup>52</sup> See *The Letters of Robert Burns*, 2nd edn, ed. J. De Lancey Ferguson and G. Ross Roy, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 2: 181.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 318. Note that this passage was reconstructed by the editors after being cancelled by the letter's recipient (see 1: lxi).

<sup>54</sup> George Thomson, *Select Collection* (London: J. Preston, and Edinburgh: George Thomson, 1803), Preface, 3. Thomson actually had doubts about accepting at least the geographical details of Beattie's theory; the reasons for his reticence will be discussed at the end of Chapter 5. By later editions of his Preface, he had removed his caveats.

awareness, too, simplicity and nature had been the coveted qualities in essentialist national rivalries – even before nature had carried the sentimental and primitivist connotations of the folk as such. (For instance, the good “British” qualities that were set against “Italian” culture in the controversy around *The Beggar’s Opera* were conceived in terms of simplicity and naturalness.) So it is no accident that the term “national music” entered the Anglophone discourse through discussions of Scottish music in the wake of Ossian: this most “natural” of nations provided the stimulus for the debates and deliberations that refined the ideas of musical nature and genius into a category resembling folk music (recall that Gregory had used the terms national music and natural music interchangeably in the 1760s). Soon after “national music” entered parlance, however, it began to take on a life of its own – as a category moving beyond Scotland, in fact beyond geographical limitations in general. Ritson’s expansion of Beattie’s ideas to the Highlands and beyond was telling of the new power of the term as a transnational category – as was Charles Burney’s unfulfilled intention in the 1770s to write a chapter of his *General History* on “national music” from across the entire *world*.<sup>55</sup> Around the same time, “artificial” features that had at first been cast as specifically Italian or French could also be extracted from their geographical associations, forming a balancing category to national music. Though geographical connotations certainly did linger on a deeper level (with important consequences as we shall see later), the potential to separate “natural” and “artificial” categories from geography – at least in the abstract – was a crucial precursor to the folk and art music categories.

Back in the 1760s, when Gregory in his treatise posited “two different species of music” in Scotland, “one for the learned in the Science, and another for the vulgar,”<sup>56</sup> he called these two domains specifically “national music” and, more loosely, “cultivated” music and taste. This seems like a straightforward categorization, and David Johnson even uses Gregory’s essay to assert that his generation recognized folk and art music as such.<sup>57</sup> Yet while Gregory certainly adumbrated aspects of the modern categories, neither of his musical “species” yet had the glosses present in the lasting concepts of “folk” and “art.” Because Gregory’s “national music” was still basically bardic and feudal, the

<sup>55</sup> Kerry S. Grant, in *Dr. Burney as Critic and Historian of Music* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), 50–2, gives Burney’s original outline for his work, as it was preserved in Padre Martini’s copy. Rousseau, according to Burney himself, was especially pleased that Burney planned to include a chapter on “national music” from around the world (see *ibid.*, 298). Grant also gives a brief discussion here about Burney’s attitudes to folk music in general, but without speculating on the writers who helped form his opinions, or his influence on others.

<sup>56</sup> Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 95. <sup>57</sup> Johnson, *Music and Society*, 4–5.



categories at stake in Gregory's work retained more of their geographical and temporal concerns than would later formulations. To Gregory and most of his contemporaries, the "national" versus "cultivated" division often devolved onto country of origin (Italy versus France for Rousseau, Scotland versus Italy for Fergusson, Brown, Tytler, Gregory, etc.), and/or political nostalgia for a feudal national past.

Ideas such as Beattie's changed this, beginning with the national side of the binary. A consistent element in almost all condemnations of new music echoing across Europe in the later eighteenth century (from the left and right) was its susceptibility to frivolous fashion and shallow virtuosity. This objection often manifested itself in a disdain for instrumental music and over-ornamentation, both of which were seen in the later eighteenth century as distancing music from nature. Beattie was utterly typical here: he preferred the "simpler strains of former ages" to "a great part of our fashionable music" because the latter "seems intended rather to tickle and astonish the hearers, than to inspire them with any permanent emotions."<sup>58</sup> However, while many others expressed similar preferences,<sup>59</sup> Beattie's own ideas raised the question of why feudal patrons should have been any more immune to fashion than the modern public. He offered a new idealized counterpart to fashion: a vision of uncorrupted peasants who could not possibly have been touched by the intrigue and decadence of either urban *or* courtly (bardic) life. In the revolutionary *Zeitgeist* of the end of the century, this vision led to a clearer separation of artistic origins along the lines of "low" and "high." Modern "professed musicians" were no longer contrasted to the "natural" ancient bards who unified poetry and music – as in Macpherson, Percy, Gregory, Brown, and even the early Ritson – but now to a different vision of nature: the uneducated people at large.

The new approach brought the working of the creative mind to the fore, eclipsing geographical and conjectural issues. There is a huge implication in the subtle difference of wording when Beattie himself claimed that James Oswald – a Scot – "imitated" the Scottish national music rather than composing it, a distinction Oswald himself would never have made.<sup>60</sup> The older model of symbolic authorship, in which the whole Scottish style might be traced to one special individual, is

<sup>58</sup> Beattie, *Essays*, 465.

<sup>59</sup> Gregory considered it a mark of taste and genius, rather than lack thereof, to disdain "much of the modern Music" (*Comparative View*, 2nd edn [1766], 119). On the general attack on ornamentation as a symbol of luxury, fashion, and thus moral decay, see Aspden, "An Infinity of Factions," 14–15. Other examples are given above and below.

<sup>60</sup> Beattie, *Essays*, 484. It is interesting to note that Beattie, writing in the 1760s and 1770s, does not yet make similar differentiations in Italian music; the Italian music he discusses as "national" is what would today be considered "art music": Palestrina and opera for example (*ibid.*, 485–8).



here more or less completely inverted: now Oswald, a trained professional, could apparently only draw on a style that belonged, creatively, to a whole people.

Thus, although attacks along basically nationalist lines continued in Scotland, by the 1780s and 1790s many other criticisms of musical ornamentation or similar stylistic features no longer resonated primarily as an opposition of national styles, but instead betrayed a clearer sense that “two species” of music might not only exist in the same country, but *originate* in the same country, with different purpose. John Leyden contended in 1801 that: “The airs of most Scottish tunes, which are still chaunted in the pastoral districts of Scotland, are much more simple than the sets which are found in collections, and which have passed under the hand of a composer.”<sup>61</sup> By “a composer” here, Leyden seems to imply any professional at any time – an idea that would have been foreign to Percy only thirty-five years earlier. Alexander Campbell (whose “Conversation on Scottish Song” we examined in the [previous chapter](#)) drew similar lines: he savagely condemned “professional” treatment of Scottish peasant melodies. Complaining of his own countryman McGibbon’s mid-century *Collection of Scots Tunes*, Campbell wrote: “His sets of our native tunes, like everything of the same kind that comes through the hands of professed musicians, savour strongly of pedantic garnish.”<sup>62</sup> These “professed musicians” are no longer inherently “Italian” (though nationalist undertones remain); nor are they contrasted to older professional bards, but instead to the anonymous collective.

Campbell even projected his national/cultivated split back into the very bardic period that itself had represented a monolithic nature for Gregory’s generation: he marked “the distinction, necessary to be noticed, between the artful compositions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the popular songs of those times.”<sup>63</sup> Here Campbell was writing in 1798, and drawing openly on both Beattie and Ritson.<sup>64</sup> The idea that such a binary might be projected back even into the Renaissance was new enough that it had not occurred to William Tytler, writing less than twenty years earlier; but that did not stop Campbell from taking Tytler himself to task for not recognizing the split!<sup>65</sup>

Thus, by the turn of the nineteenth century, we have a clear categorical separation between two categories of music that could be written in any country, supposedly at any time – a separation based on the criterion of personal origin: professional origin versus anonymous,

<sup>61</sup> “Preliminary Dissertation” to *The Complaynt of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1801), 276.

<sup>62</sup> *Albyn’s Anthology*, vi. <sup>63</sup> “Conversation on Scottish Song,” 15.

<sup>64</sup> Ritson is cited only as “an ingenious writer,” because he published anonymously.

<sup>65</sup> “Conversation on Scottish Song.”

peasant origin. Furthermore, the low “national music” side of the binary at least was now closely approaching the modern idea of “folk music.”

## Herder

The fallout from Ossian and the discourse on national music went well beyond the British Isles as well. It would be impossible to write a history of the development of the categories of “folk” and “art” music without a consideration of Johann Gottfried Herder, who coined the German word “Volkslied” – first in a well-known essay from the 1773 compendium *Of German Style and Art* (*Von deutscher Art und Kunst: einige fliegende Blätter*).<sup>66</sup> Herder’s interest in the idea presently led to his own song collection (*Alte Volkslieder*, 1774). Though this first version included only British and German material, Herder soon widened his scope, producing a larger set with “folk songs” from across Europe and abroad, and he added to the second volume of this 1778–9 collection an important Introduction outlining his expanded views on *Volkslieder*.<sup>67</sup> Though Herder was impressed with songs of the French troubadours and Scandinavian skalds, British and especially Scottish sources were the most indispensable in helping him to conceive of “folk song” – and Ossian was particularly vital.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the essay from *German Style and Art* in which Herder first coined the term *Volkslied* was actually about “Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples” (“Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker”). Percy was important too:<sup>69</sup> one of the most famous poems in Herder’s *Volkslieder* collection was the Scottish ballad “Edward,” taken from Percy’s

<sup>66</sup> Hamburg: Bode, 1773. This famous project of Herder’s also included essays by Goethe and others.

<sup>67</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder, *Volkslieder*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Weygand, 1778–9). I will cite all of Herder’s works from the standard *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan, 33 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877–1913).

<sup>68</sup> See also Alexander Gillies, *Herder und Ossian* (Berlin: Juncker und Dünhaupt, 1933); Rudolf Tombo, *Ossian in Germany: Bibliography, General Survey, Ossian’s Influence upon Klopstock and the Bards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1901), esp. 67–71; Robert T. Clark, Jr., *Herder: His Life and Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), esp. 143–50. Herder also later wrote “Homer und Ossian” (this appeared in *Die Horen* in 1795), and in several letters discussed Ramsay, Ossian, and “the character of the Scottish Highlanders,” etc. See for example J. G. Herder, *Briefe: Gesamtausgabe, 1763–1803*, 10 vols. (Weimar: Bohlau, 1977–96), 1: 270 (letter 110, 1770): “Aber die Liebe in den alten Schottischen Bardenliedern! – nur in ihnen ist sie die ganze Zartheit und Süßigkeit, und Anmuth, und Adel und Stärke, und die feine Reinigkeit der Sitten, die uns ganz einnimmt, uns aber doch nie zu etwas mehr, als Menschen macht . . . meine Eden ist mehr eine alte Celtische Hütte auf einem rauhen Gebürge, zwischen Frost und Sturm und Nebel; als mir Gefñer u. Klopstock ihr süßestes Eden in Orient, ihren himmel u. ihr Paradies mahlen können”; see also 4: 39 (letter 15), etc.

<sup>69</sup> See Lohre, *Vom Percy zum Wunderhorn*, 8–25; Clark, *Herder*, 116, 142, 147, etc.

*Reliques*. Even Allan Ramsay figured in Herder's thought.<sup>70</sup> In general, Scotland represented for Herder the place where "the songs of a living folk" still thrived, and he yearned to go there to hear them.<sup>71</sup> British sources were coming to play this role for German thinkers in general, and sometimes the line between Scotland and England was blurred with the view from such geographical distance: Herder's own finalization and reissuing of his *Volkslieder* collection in 1778–9 was, for example, spurred by the publication of another collection of both Scottish and English "old ballads and songs" by his fellow German Friedrich Ursinus.<sup>72</sup> Whether directly Scottish or British in the broader sense, it would have been impossible for Herder to formulate his ideas about folk music without these examples, largely the legacy of Macpherson's "Ossian."

Certainly the word Herder coined, and the opinions he voiced about *Volkslied*, catalyzed a whole fascination in his own country; and, if Herder relied on British sources to conceive of his term, German ideas would eventually go back the other way as well. How they did so and to what extent are thornier questions: in general, Herder's contribution to the discourse on folk and art music – both within Germany and abroad – has been both dangerously overrated and dangerously undervalued in scholarship for the last hundred years.

The overvaluing of Herder goes back to several German works on the origin of the concept "Volkslied," which began to appear around the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>73</sup> These studies are right to place the new concept in Herder's *generation*, but giving him all the credit because he coined the word ends up distorting the importance of German discourse over that of other countries, and the importance of text over music. Paul Levy's 1911 *Geschichte des Begriffes Volkslied* is a remarkable work in that Levy is one of the first to realize that "folk song" only makes complete sense as an idea in relation to "cultivated" or "art song." Levy claims that the word and concept *Volkslied* could have little meaning in an era before there was a distinction between folk and art poetry, and thus it is no accident that the word emerged in the generation of Rousseau and Herder.<sup>74</sup> Levy also relates the emergence of the concept at this time to the fact that the origins of cultural products were becoming newly important to German scholars of poetry (31).

<sup>70</sup> See his Introduction to the 1774 *Alte Volkslieder* collection (*Werke*, 25: 7); also *Briefe*, 4: 69 (letter 53; here Herder also asks Boie if he can get his hands on a collection of Scottish melodies), etc.

<sup>71</sup> In Scotland he could: "die Gesänge eines lebenden Volks lebendig hören" (*Werke*, 5: 167).

<sup>72</sup> Friedrich Ursinus, *Balladen und Lieder altenglischer und altschottischer Dichtart* (Berlin: Christian Friedrich Himburg, 1777). See Clark, *Herder*, 258.

<sup>73</sup> See Introduction, n. 11, for a list of citations.

<sup>74</sup> Levy, *Volkslied*, 7, 29–30. Parenthetical citations in this paragraph refer to this book.

And he argues, as I do, that the concept of "folk" song was linked to the moment that earlier observations about the nature and creativity of "savages" were brought home to the native peasantry: Levy sees Herder himself expanding the idea of wild "Volk" to include the uneducated classes in Germany and the rest of Europe (33–4). In all these ways, Levy correctly targets the 1770s as the time at which the concept of *Volkslied* – a new idea – emerged. But Levy gives too much credit to Herder himself, a problem that comes largely from an exclusive focus on German thought. When Levy considers the influences on Herder, he counts foremost among them non-Germans (especially the Ossian publications, Percy, Edward Young, and Rousseau, 22–9). Yet from the exact moment when he turns to the word and concept as such, Levy is concerned only with the German theoretical discourse.<sup>75</sup>

This creates a problem, since, as we have just seen, in the Anglophone discourse on Scottish music there was a growing conception of "national" (vs. "cultivated") songs and music before, during, and after Herder's work. Levy's contention that "England" (i.e. Britain) provided the stimulus to collect national song, but neither the word nor the concept,<sup>76</sup> does not hold up. As for the word: in writings such as Gregory's, "national songs" and "national music" by this time had picked up many of the same connotations as Herder's simultaneously coined *Volkslied*.<sup>77</sup> Some other languages, too, developed roughly parallel concepts in the 1770s without a word specifically derived from Herder. (The Italians for example were beginning to discuss "*canzoni popolari*," and even "*canzoni tradizionali*" – and in fact these and other continental formulations generally betrayed the influence of *Ossian* reception rather than Herder reception.<sup>78</sup> The earliest Russian collections of what would

<sup>75</sup> The same is true of Erwin Kircher's study of the origin of the concept ("*Volkslied und Volkspoesie in der Sturm- und Drangzeit*") though this is perhaps unsurprising considering that his study appeared in the journal *Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung*.

<sup>76</sup> Here Levy is seconding Wilhelm Uhl; see *Das Deutsche Lied: Acht Vorträge* (Leipzig, 1900), 29–30. Uhl goes further, claiming that equivalent English terms such as "popular songs" came from the German. He is wrong in principle if not in specifics: "national song" appears in work such as Gregory's and Beattie's by the early 1760s.

<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Herder even used the word "Nationallied" in German at the end of the 1760s, and at the start of the "Ossian" essay (for example *Werke*, 5: 164), before for the first time replacing it with "*Lieder des Volks*" and with "*Volkslied*" (5: 174, 189, etc.) later in the same essay.

<sup>78</sup> See for example Antonio Eximeno's *Dell'origine e delle regole della musica, colla storia del suo progresso, decadenza, e rinnoiazione* (Rome: Michel' Angelo Barbiellini, 1774), which takes on a project in some ways similar to that of the universal music histories in English, but adopts a vantage point similar to Rousseau's to champion natural music as an imitation of speech. Eximeno uses the term "*canzoni popolari*" in a way that mirrors the path of "national song" in British writing of the time. He distinguishes this category from opera (in fact he notes that "In Italia sono poco comuni le canzoni popolari, perciocchè la maggior parte del popolo è d'orecchio così delicato, che li basta sentir le Arie del theatro per sollazzarsi poi cantandole per istrada ... Se diletta

come to be seen as “folk song” show an interesting progress in their titles, moving away from the nondescript term “various” [*razniye*] songs in 1770, to “simple” [*prostiye*] songs in 1776, to a Russian version of “folk-national” [*narodniye*] songs in 1790. The last change brought a more detailed discussion of “folk music” as concept, but still using a home-grown term rather than a borrowed German cognate.<sup>79</sup>) Thus, while it is true that Herder’s fresh word made possible an immediate reaction and discourse in Germany,<sup>80</sup> a new specific term was not needed to fuel British (or other) discussions of the phenomenon, even in Herder’s wake.

And as for the concept: until the turn of the nineteenth century, Herder’s work was basically unknown in Britain;<sup>81</sup> so it seems that

ancora il popolo di Roma di formare per le contrade concerti a Quattro e più voci . . . ” [450]). It should be noted that in Eximeno there is little discussion of musical origins in this context, and his term ends up remaining nebulous, and certainly does not offer an idea that peasant composition may underlie national traditions. Like many Enlightenment thinkers he seems more interested in the effects of music (positive or negative) than its source (see pp. 450–2). Notably, too, the example of English “popular” song he gives (p. 452, ref. to ex. 14) is a highly stylized pastoral (“Ye Happy Nymphs whose harmless hearts”). Italian ideas closer to the later idea of “folk song” appear in the same year, in Abate Alberto Fortis, *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, 2 vols. (Venice: Presso Alvise Milocco, 1774). Fortis makes use of the terms “storie nazionali” and “canzoni tradizionali” (1: 88–93) in discussing the customs of the Morlacchians; the latter term notably stresses oral tradition. (On the idea of “traditional” music, see my Chapter 5.) Even here, the origins are still considered bardic, though. Note that Fortis’s formulation of these terms exhibits the influence of Ossian, for example when he claims that the Balkan traditional songs did not match up to the power of Scottish bardic poetry (see 1: 89), but there is no indication that Herder’s work had played a role yet in Italy.

<sup>79</sup> Mikhail Dmitriyevich Chulkov, *Sobraniye raznikh pesen* (1770–4); Vasilii Fyodorovich Trutovsky, *Sobraniye russkikh prostikh pesen s notami* (St. Petersburg, 1776); [Nikolay Aleksandrovich Lvov] and Johann Gottfried (“Ivan”) Prach, *Sobraniye narodnikh russkikh pesen s ikh golosami* (St. Petersburg, 1790). Richard Taruskin suggests the last collection and its terminology were indebted to Herder (see *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997], ch. 1, esp. 16), but as with other languages, the cognate word “folk” was not borrowed itself into Russian until later, and still co-exists with the autochthonous term. See also the Introduction by Margarita Mazo in a modern facsimile edition, *A Collection of Russian Folk Songs by Nikolai Lvov and Ivan Prach*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), esp. 14–19, on the different terminology and collections. Note too that in the earlier collections there is no indication of who composed the tunes: only in the Lvov/Prach collection is the subject of “peasant” creation broached (and it is tied to questions of whether peasants are imitating or retaining ancient Greek practices). See Lvov and Prach, *Sobraniye*, Introduction “On Russian Folk-singing,” esp. iv–v, x.

<sup>80</sup> John Meier perhaps captures the situation when he claims that Herder created the German concept, term, and discourse (*Kunstlied und Volkslied in Deutschland*, 1).

<sup>81</sup> Large-scale English Herder translations appeared from the turn of the century: *Oriental Dialogues* (trans. 1801 [originally *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, 1782–3]) and *Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Man* (trans. 1803 [originally *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1784–91]). The essays on “folk song” were not translated, and I have not even found any reviews of or references to Herder’s collections of *Volkslieder* in British periodicals or other publications before the end of the eighteenth century. (Some very short mentions of other, largely unrelated,

in Britain at least, Herder's thought hardly figured at all in the development of a similar concept to *Volkslied*: the term "national song" picked up the same connotations of origin among "the people" in the writings of Beattie, Ritson, Burns and others, that Herder's *Volkslied* carried in German. Besides the central "national song" and "national music," other English terms – "popular songs," "traditional songs," etc. – could also serve to cover the same ground as Herder's German term.<sup>82</sup> All these described adequately enough a conceptual parallel to the German word *Volkslied* that even when Herder's work did eventually become known in Britain, there was still a delay of about half a century before the word "folk" replaced the perfectly functional English terms that were already describing this domain.<sup>83</sup>

A final note on overstating Herder's contribution: it should be noted that even within Germany, "Volkslied" as coined by Herder dealt almost exclusively with poetry. Though Herder made mention of music, he remained vague about it, and it was left for others – such as J. A. P. Schulz, C. F. D. Schubart, and J. F. Reichardt – to follow up this angle even in Herder's own language.<sup>84</sup> (Levy does not consider music, nor do many other writers on German *Volkslied*.)

In Britain, then, both Herder's term and his general thought about "folk music" could not have played a role before well into the nineteenth century – but these facts did not prevent a strong discourse on "national music." I would not want to replace a narrow overestimation of Herder's influence on this count with a narrow overestimation of someone else's. Beattie for example certainly did not single-handedly create the idea of folk music by first suggesting that much "national music" might have its origin quite specifically among the people – people from the lower classes. But neither did Herder single-handedly create "folk music" by naming it *Volkslied* in German. It is much more accurate to claim that the concept of folk music was the creation of a

writings by Herder appeared in the *Analytic Review* in the 1790s.) On early Herder reception in Britain, see Marcia Allentuck, "Henry Fuseli and J. G. Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* in Britain: An Unremarked Connection," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35 (1974), 113–20; and Diana Behler, "Henry Crabb Robinson as a Mediator of Lessing and Herder to England," *Lessing Yearbook* 7 (1975), 105–26. Behler discusses Robinson's "Remarks on the Genius and Writings of Herder" in the *Monthly Repository* (1808), vol. 3.

<sup>82</sup> These terms came to join "national music" in the early nineteenth century, for example in the work of William Motherwell.

<sup>83</sup> Perhaps Germany could have survived for much longer without a new term too: Herder had been using "Nationallied" in his own writing before he coined the term "Volkslied," and he himself often continued to use "Nationallied" as an equivalent, as did other German writers for much of the next century.

<sup>84</sup> Thus, the most compendious study of the concept "Volkslied" from a musical point of view (von Pulikowski, *Geschichte des Begriffes Volkslied im musikalischen Schrifttum*) begins around and after Herder rather than with Herder himself (though it too confines itself exclusively to the German *Kulturkreis*).



generation. The idea leaned heavily on the recent work of Rousseau, on exotic tourism, on anthropological thought about “savage” societies, and, perhaps most relevantly, on Ossian reception. The discussion within Britain seems to anticipate the most important ideas about “national” music elsewhere – because Ossian’s ever-presence was coupled there to an already strong view of “nature” as part of Scottish music. But once the ball was rolling, it picked up a good deal of momentum. Sometimes ideas and even material, such as Ossianic poetry itself, were exchanged quickly and freely across borders, while at other times ideas developed – out of nationalist and liberal trends – along parallel tracks in different places. Overall, while Herder’s writing did have important repercussions within Germany, and soon found resonance abroad as well, we can see that he did not personally create the concept of folk song, let alone folk music in general.

Meanwhile, the *underestimation* of Herder’s input has been manifest in the failure to recognize the novelty of ideas expressed by his generation. This trend has in fact been more pervasive and long-standing than the tradition of giving Herder sole credit for distinguishing between “folk” and “art.” Writers who downplay the importance of Herder’s generation have not generally felt the need to claim specifically that Herder himself was unimportant, because the gist of their assumptions that Herder did not invent the concept of folk song is that that concept has always existed. Much folk song scholarship or general Western music history operates on this premise, implicitly or explicitly; so I will take here one relatively recent example from German scholarship that does specifically discuss Herder: Walter Wiora’s 1970 “Das Alter des Begriffes Volkslied,” which also appeared in translation in the *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* the next year as “Reflections on the Problem: How Old is the Concept Folksong?”<sup>85</sup> Wiora is a great admirer of Herder; he sees Herder as an original and powerful thinker whose coinage of a new term sparked interest in his named object. But Wiora contends that both that object and the concept *Volkslied* were already very old. Wiora reacts specifically to Levy and to more recent claims by Ernst Klusen<sup>86</sup> – basically accusing these writers of partaking in a revisionist fantasy, and suggesting that it is pedantic to look for *exact* linguistic precedents to Herder’s word. For Wiora, medieval terms such as *vulgaris musica* and *Bawrliedlein* defined concepts similar in most respects to Herder’s conception of *Volksmusik*, even if they also showed subtle differences from Herder’s idea. Wiora

<sup>85</sup> See the Introduction, n. 11 for full citations.

<sup>86</sup> Wiora’s article was clearly spurred by the offense he took at Ernst Klusen’s recent work, which had sought to dismiss the idealistic idea of “Volkslied,” and replace the term with “Gruppenlied.” See Klusen, “Das Gruppenlied als Gegenstand,” and *Volkslied: Fund und Erfindung*.



then cites a series of theoretical writings from the Middle Ages onward to show that there had always been distinctions between high and low, between town and country, and similar categories.<sup>87</sup>

Wiora's argument is ultimately unconvincing. Until the mid-eighteenth century, the terms and distinctions he invokes were (as I argued in the [first chapter](#)) primarily concerned with distinguishing musical *function*, or occasionally with guild-inspired exclusivity among musicians. They seldom even approach a modern distinction between “folk” and “art.” Wiora's article is full of sloppy assumptions about words in general,<sup>88</sup> and especially about words whose connotations actually changed significantly over the many centuries that Wiora discusses, a fact that Wiora completely ignores. (Foremost among the words whose meaning changed are of course “nature” and “art” themselves.) Only one of Wiora's examples presents a potentially strong challenge to the argument that the folk/art distinction was new in Herder's time. It is worth looking at this example, a passage from the writing of the sixteenth-century French essayist Michel de Montaigne, because it has been cited often as an early recognition of a folk/art dichotomy.<sup>89</sup> Montaigne famously opined that “Popular and purely natural poetry has spontaneous effects and charms by which it may be compared with the principal beauty of poetry as perfected according to art; as is seen in the villanelles of Gascony and the songs that are brought back to us from the nations that have no knowledge of any science, or even of writing. Mediocre poetry, which stops between the two, is disdained, without honor and without value.”<sup>90</sup> There is no

<sup>87</sup> “Alter des Begriffes Volkslied,” 425–8.

<sup>88</sup> In his quotations of medieval monks, for example, Wiora is happy suddenly to equate references to any secular music as “folk music” (“Alter des Begriffes Volkslied,” 428), building on a point he believes he has proved; but this case in fact helps show the very weaknesses in his argument. This is particularly evident in the English version of the article, where Wiora actually specifically translates the Latin “cantus laycorum,” “odas,” and “saeculares cantilenas,” all into the English as “folksongs” (see “Concept Folksong,” 30–1). In this version of the article he also translates Praetorius's category of songs “gesungen” by workers and peasants as “created” by them, a possible reading but one that requires more explanation.

<sup>89</sup> Wiora's discussion is on p. 427 of “Alter des Begriffes Volkslied.” For another claim that Montaigne's distinction was the same as Herder's, see the report on the Gesellschaft für deutsche Literatur meeting in *Deutsche Literatur-Zeitung* 13 (1892), 768–70. Another important source that cites this passage of Montaigne is Cocchiara's *History of Folklore*, 15–19, quote on p. 15, though Cocchiara does not make the sort of grand claims that Wiora does, seeing the quote as embodying similar concerns, but not as a full embodiment of Herder's ideas.

<sup>90</sup> *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, newly trans. Donald M. Frame (London: Hamish Hamilton, [1958]), 227. [“La poésie populaire et purement naturelle a des naïvetés [sic] et graces par où elle se compare à la principale beauté de la poésie parfaite selon l'art; comme il se void és [sic] villanelles de Gascogne et aux chansons qu'on nous rapporte des nations qui n'ont congnoissance [sic] d'aucune science, ny mesme d'écriture.” (Montaigne, *Les Essais*, 3 vols. [Paris: Quadrige/Puf, 1965], 1: 313)]. The

doubt that Montaigne does anticipate many late eighteenth-century concerns. But his case is idiosyncratic, whereas the rhetoric of “cultivated” versus “natural” or “national” music was becoming omnipresent in the late eighteenth century. More importantly, perhaps, there is another key difference between Montaigne’s formulation and Herder’s, which Levy does a particularly good job of showing: even for Montaigne the origin of the poetry is relatively incidental (though he does speak of non-literate societies); the difference he emphasizes is one of style.<sup>91</sup> Certainly in Montaigne there is no idea of a collective national “Volk” – and a folk that can create to boot.<sup>92</sup> That Herder himself put part of this excerpt of Montaigne’s as the first epigraph at the start of his *Volkslieder*, translating Montaigne’s “poësie populaire” as “Volkspoesie,” shows that, like anyone who is advancing new ideas but who is concerned with history, Herder was adept at drawing new meanings out of old materials, adapting them to suit his needs.<sup>93</sup> The underestimation of

quote is in the essay “Of Vain Subtleties.” The essay begins with a joke about useless human pursuits, then explains a game Montaigne and his company have been playing about things that meet at two ends but are different in the middle. (The implication, I think, is that this game itself is a vain pursuit.) Anyway, the relevant passage comes at the end of the essay, the last of the examples: “The simplest peasants are good men, and good men the philosophers, at least what passes for philosophers in our time: strong and clear natures, enriched by a broad education in useful knowledge. The half-breeds who have disdained the first, ignorant of letters, and have not been able to reach the other – their rear end between two saddles, like me and so many others – are dangerous, inept, and importunate: these men trouble the world. Therefore for my part I draw back as much as I can into the first and natural stage, which for naught I attempted to leave” (*Complete Works*, 227). This is the context for the quote; among other things, it shows Montaigne’s famous formulation to be much more tongue-in-cheek than is acknowledged.

<sup>91</sup> Levy, *Volkslied*, 16–18. Levy also discusses the cases of Philip Sidney and of Friedrich von Hagedorn as forerunners to Herder, making similar points (*ibid.*, 18–21). Both of these formulations strike me as having less in common with later folk song concepts than does Montaigne.

<sup>92</sup> Another notable precedent that should not be misinterpreted is George Puttenham’s *Arte of English Poesie: Contrived into Three Bookes* (London: Richard Field, 1589). Peter Burke, for example (*Popular Culture*, 277) claims that Puttenham distinguishes between “vulgar” and “artificial” poetry, which indeed Puttenham does, in some sense. However, in the passage at hand (*English Poesie*, 7), it is clear that by “vulgar” Puttenham means vernacular rhyming poetry, not our modern “folk.” And though he notes that this rhyming poetry is “universal” – found across the world, even among the newly discovered savages of the Americas – the context for his claim is to argue that English rhyming verse has a bid to be called verse alongside “artificial” poetry (i.e. metrical non-rhyming classical verse). It is notable too, that, discussing shepherd life and verse, Puttenham considers the pastoral eclogue itself to be a form of “artificial” poetry. Clearly, this too is not the modern folk-art split, despite some apparent similarities.

<sup>93</sup> Herder, *Werke*, 25: 129. Herder also translates Addison’s term “ordinary song or ballad” (see *Spectator* no. 70, from Addison’s famous discussion of “Chevy Chase”) as “gewöhnlicher Volksgesang” here (25: 129) in another epigraph. Addison’s discussion also anticipates Herder in many ways, but again there are also important differences. Addison is one of the first to refer specifically to ballads that are passed “from father to son among the common people,” though it is clear that for Addison, unlike Beattie and

Herder is thus partly the underestimation of his generation, with its new idea of “national music” and later the added radical element of an idealized “low” *Volk* or people to compose this music.

Herder is undervalued in a different way by his champions: it turns out that his most personal contribution to the issue had to do with *art* and its relationship to the folk. I will pick up this thread in Chapter 6, but for now I turn to the important repercussions of the idea of “national music,” which, as the eighteenth century faded, had already come to carry much of the force of “folk music” in its lasting form.

Herder, the ballad represents the artwork of a specific “poet” of a past age, an age that demonstrates better qualities than the present age; at no point does Addison speculate about the identity of the ballad’s writer, or consider that it represents a “people.” It is only the forceful, moralistic, simple style of the poem that draws Addison to it. (See *The Spectator*, ed. Bond, 1: 297–8.) As with Montaigne, Addison makes an especially good epigraph for Herder when the latter can translate Addison’s ideas freely, and infuse his words with new connotations.

# 4

## The invention of folk modality, 1775–1840

In 1768, Jean-Jacques Rousseau published in his famous musical *Dictionnaire* the following specimen of “Chinese” music, drawn from the Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Du Halde’s *Geographical, Historical, Chronological, Political, and Physical Description of China*.<sup>1</sup>

Example 2: “Air Chinois,” from J.-J. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768), planche N.



Aside from the F♯s in the third measure (of which more later), the music is pentatonic, but there is little else about the “Chinese” excerpt that would suggest parallels with Scotland. Few of the turns of phrase here are idiomatic of Highland or Lowland music. For example, even in a Scottish reel demonstrating a similar rhythmic drive, one would not likely encounter the constant interruption of running eighths with paired quarter notes on repeated pitches. And while the reel might dip down to two notes on the same pitch in the middle of a grouping of four eighths, as here, it would almost always leave those notes back

<sup>1</sup> Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: Chez la Veuve Duchesne, 1768), planche N. See also Du Halde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie* (La Haye: H. Scheurleer, 1736), vol. 3, plate facing p. 328.

upwards; or, if it did continue on downwards, the four-note grouping would be followed by a completely different figuration – precisely the opposite of what happens in measure 3 here. The cadences, too, feel un-Scottish in several ways: there are for example no internal resting-places on what might be called the sixth degree of the modern major scale (in this case E), a nearly ubiquitous element in Scottish “major” pentatonic tunes (think of the end of the first phrase of “Auld Lang Syne”). Exceptions to all these generalizations about Scottish music abound, of course, but not all combined in one place, as in this example.

Yet this little excerpt from Rousseau’s dictionary became a foundation stone in scholarly discussion of Scottish musical theory. For the next hundred years it would rear its head again and again in books and articles on Scottish music, accompanied by the assertion that it sounded uncannily and undeniably Scottish.<sup>2</sup> The first to claim the Scottish connection in writing was Charles Burney himself, a man who probably should have known better, since he had extensive exposure at least to Lowland Scottish music through his friendship with James Oswald.<sup>3</sup> The wave of Scottish writers who came along afterward, one by one bending over backwards to second Burney’s opinion, had even fewer excuses. There must have been compelling reasons to focus on the similarities between this “Air Chinois” and Scottish music – and to ignore the differences. The most obvious explanation for this emphasis on similarity is that those writing about Scottish music from 1775 until at least 1830 based their discussion almost exclusively on scale-types, and downplayed questions of melodic construction or other features. But this observation is more a symptom than an answer; it only raises further questions. Foremost: *why* did these writers focus only on abstracted scales, effectively ignoring both the long theoretical tradition of *Figurenlehre* study stretching back to the seventeenth century (by way of Johann Adolph Scheibe and Johann Mattheson), and the later work of Joseph Riepel and Heinrich Christoph Koch on issues of phrase construction?<sup>4</sup> To get more satisfactory answers, we need to probe the intellectual currents that ran below the surface.

<sup>2</sup> The tune also had an illustrious career as a representative of China proper. It was reproduced in manuscripts by Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, and in Jean-Benjamin de La Borde’s *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (Paris: Pierres, 1780), and later used by Carl Maria von Weber as the main theme in his incidental music to Schiller’s *Turandot*. On this aspect of the Melody’s fate, see Kii-Ming Lo, “In Search for a Chinese Melody: Tracing the Source of Weber’s *Musik zu Turandot*,” in *Tradition and its Future in Music: Report of the SIMS 1990*, Osaka (Tokyo: Mita Press, 1991), 511–21; and Frank Ll. Harrison, “Observation, Elucidation, Utilization: Western Attitudes to Eastern Musics, ca. 1600–ca. 1830,” in *Slavonic and Western Music: Essays for Gerald Abraham*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown and Roland John Wiley (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 5–31.

<sup>3</sup> See Nelson, “Scotland in London’s Musical Life,” esp. 79, n. 160.

<sup>4</sup> On these trends in eighteenth-century theory, see Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Leonard Ratner,

This chapter will consider those undertows, examining how an element such as Rousseau's Chinese specimen could propel so much theory in a land at great geographical and historical remove from the example's supposed Chinese source. The driving causes were deep-seated enough that the legacy of Rousseau's excerpt still lingers. In the twentieth century, even after the specific references to Rousseau had finally faded from Scottish music scholarship, folk song researchers still relied heavily on the patterns of discourse stemming from the Rousseau/Burney tradition – applying the modal systems built from these foundations to British-Irish-American music in general, and to other folk traditions. It would not even be unreasonable to claim that the little “Air Chinois” in Rousseau's *Dictionnaire* lurks somewhere in the foundation of almost all discussion of “folk” modality, Scottish or otherwise.

Perhaps this should not be surprising. We have seen in Chapter 2 how the folk came to represent a primitive group still existing in the present, and how the discourse around this collective was drawn heavily from ideas about the progressive development of humanity (and thus music) away from its “ancient” and “Oriental” roots. The idea of studying folk music from a technical angle at all was the result of a teleological project of history-writing by musicians who considered it a necessary stage to be worked through on the way to better things.<sup>5</sup> Folk music investigations became an essential part of the [first chapter](#) of a story whose primary musical focus was to justify and explain more completely the “cultivated” music of recent times. This historiographical approach has not withered completely, even after various postmodern attacks. As recently as 1998, *The New Oxford History of Music* was reprinted with its first volume entitled “Ancient and Oriental Music.” The grouping of ancient with Oriental is the key here, for it helps explain the role of Rousseau's little “Air Chinois” in the study of Scottish music: the politics of Orientalism were the politics of early folk music study as well. As Edward Said put it in his famous study of *Orientalism*: “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.”<sup>6</sup> The “folk” would come to serve a similar function as thrilling and potentially subversive foil. Indeed, the words East and Orient could easily be replaced with the word folk (and vice versa) in most of the Orientalist discourse – from general notions accepted as

*Classic Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1980); and Wye J. Allanbrook, Introduction to “The Late Eighteenth Century” volume of the new version of *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History*; in the single-volume compilation pp. 737–46.

<sup>5</sup> It is well documented that Burney had little interest in ancient music, though he felt compelled to write about it as part of his history. See Roger Lonsdale, *Dr. Charles Burney: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 143–7.

<sup>6</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

truisms, such as the idea that Western culture might be regenerated by looking to the East (folk), to more specific formulations such as Friedrich Schlegel's claim that "it is in the Orient [folk] that we must search for the highest Romanticism."<sup>7</sup>

But while it is now a cliché that early studies of folk music (and folklore) relied on the Othering and hegemonic cultural ideologies of the early anthropological disciplines in general, no one has traced the specifics of how the Western European peasantry came to be associated *musically* with the same natural, primitive world of fetishism and exoticism as the "Orientals" and "savages." As it turns out, the element that scholars most latched onto in forging such a link was the use of the pentatonic scale – a fact that helps explain how "national music" (conceived largely based on Scottish features) was from the start tied to China (and later to other parts of the "Orient").

The intellectual "mastery" of a monolithic Orient (or any Other being studied) implied an outsider status – the positivist idea of objective knowledge gleaned from a perspective above the fray.<sup>8</sup> Here the parallel between the Western Orientalists and writers on Scottish music may be less apparent, for although the idea of the folk was itself created by outsiders (i.e. educated scholars), many of those who sought to codify Scottish musical practice were *Scots*. One might expect them to display an "emic" perspective – based on "insider" terminology and outlook – rather than the purportedly objective "etic" approach of the outsider. But the Scots who wrote about their music had sampled both worlds: they had training in literate European "cultivated" music and music theory alongside their familiarity with Scottish traditions foreign to most Europeans; and what is striking is that these writers almost always chose the "etic" approach. Even when they were advocating and championing Scottish national music, they sought to do so through the channels established by mainstream Enlightenment discourse. In choosing the outsider perspective – positioning themselves as objective modern voices vis-à-vis their "primitive" subject-matter – these writers on Scottish music, whether they were Scottish or foreign, accepted the idea that certain scales and techniques were universal (among all "natural" primitive groups) and meaningfully opposed to "modern," "artful" music. Such a stance explains the broad scope of influence that their writing turned out to have.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*, esp. 98 and 115. For general speculation on the role of the Orient in the early formation of the interest in folklore in Western Europe see Cocchiara, *History of Folklore in Europe*, 29–43.

<sup>8</sup> See Said, *Orientalism*, esp. 32. See also Fabian, *Time and the Other*, xi, on the parallel to this in any discipline related to anthropology. David Gramit has recently discussed the implications of this aspect of Orientalism for German formulations of non-European musics at this time (*Cultivating Music*, 36, 58–60).



French composers in the early eighteenth century had already reveled in “ancient” and “Oriental” exoticism musically, and French Orientalists had already drawn connections, in prose studies, between the “primitive” music of the ancient Greeks and the Chinese. So the link of the ancient to the Oriental was well established. All it took was one man, Burney, who was familiar both with the French writing on Oriental music and with the reputation and sound of Scottish music as natural and primitive, to fashion a musical link between the primitive universalism of the Orient or classical antiquity and that of the newly formulated European folk. The result was an overarching theory of folk modality with enduring repercussions.

### **Before Burney**

There was no idea of “folk modality” before Burney – since there was no idea of folk music before Scottish music began to play this role in the later eighteenth century. In fact there was very little technical writing on Scottish music itself before Burney, and hardly any before 1760. True, foreigners had commented on certain essential qualities of Scottish music as early as 1700: we have seen John Dryden’s characterization of Scottish songs as having a “rude sweetness . . . natural . . . though not perfect,” and the body of so-called “Scotch songs” around this time, which also suggested that English composers thought of certain elements as Scottish. Yet we have also seen that it is difficult to find consistent stylistic features in common among these songs, beyond attempts at aping Scots vernacular poetry. If the English recognition of something Scottish in music remained vague, there was even less agreement at home until there was a clearer sense of a united cultural Scottishness. (As discussed in the [first chapter](#), there had earlier been little reason to focus on the similarities between various Scottish traditions, and greater incentive to focus on the differences.) The cultural nationalism of the eighteenth century created the first compelling ideological reasons to single out characteristics of “Scottish music” for theoretical discussion; and a further boost came mid-century as observers sought connections between the “natural” character of this Scottish music and that of other “primitive” groups. From Beattie’s time onward, there would also be an incentive to find what aspects of musical style might mark the music of uneducated and “uncorrupted” milkmaids and shepherds. Thus, semi-technical isolation of Scottish musical elements – displacing vague characterizations such as Dryden’s “rude sweetness” – began only in the 1760s, with these new national and anthropological stimuli.

The first such characterization of Scottish music came from none other than Benjamin Franklin, in a letter written in 1765 to his Scottish

friend Lord Kames.<sup>9</sup> Inspired by a short aside about melody and harmony in Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, Franklin was compelled to muse about the origins and lasting power of Scottish music.<sup>10</sup> With little precedent to build on – and with a dearth of accepted facts about Scottish music – he let his imagination run free. The broad aim of Franklin's letter was familiar enough. Like so many writers on music in the 1760s, he attacked the supposed atrocities (ornaments, bad declamation, etc.) of modern "artificial" music, while praising the "natural Pleasure arising from Melody or Harmony of sounds" (162).<sup>11</sup> Typically, too, where Rousseau had singled out Italian music as the exemplar of the natural, Franklin like Gregory and many others of his generation chose Scottish. Yet, if the set of values Franklin expressed was commonplace at the time, his specific argument was nevertheless more unusual: "the Reason why the Scotch Tunes have liv'd so long, and will probably live forever (if they escape being stifled in modern affected Ornament) is . . . that they are really Compositions of Melody and Harmony united, or rather that their Melody is Harmony" (163). Franklin focused on the idea of structural tones, which he called "emphatical notes." He assumed that the old Scottish tunes had been composed by the "minstrels" of old, worked out on harps; and, since these harps did not have a means of stopping pitches from resonating, each pitch must have continued to ring after it was sounded, thus creating simultaneous harmony with the following pitches. It would therefore have been essential for each stressed note to be consonant with the next one or two stressed notes. This, Franklin conjectured, was the reason why the "emphatical notes" in Scottish music tend to outline triads and other consonances (163–4). By having the structural pitches in concord, the old harpers created agreeable *harmony* out of pitches that sounded in *melodic* succession.

Franklin employs one common parlance of the time for the diatonic scale, calling it the "natural" scale (though, as I will detail below, this term itself would become much more complicated by the end of the century). It was widespread to represent the diatonic scale not with an

<sup>9</sup> Letter of 2 June 1765 reprinted in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968– ), 12: 158–65. Parenthetical citations in the next five paragraphs refer to this volume of this collection.

<sup>10</sup> Kames's own ideas to which Franklin was responding had not come in the particular context of Scottish music at all. See *Elements of Criticism* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid & J. Bell, 1762), 1: 166–8.

<sup>11</sup> On this point see also Franklin's letter, probably from 1762, to his brother Peter (*Papers*, 11: 539–43). Here Franklin lays out the abuses of modern music one by one, using a Handel aria as an example; he calls the declamation and roulades a "reverse of nature" and suggests to his brother that a "more pleasing popular" tune might be written by a country girl, who had never heard any music but ballads and psalms, than by any "masters."

arbitrary major scale, but specifically with C major, the most “natural” key from the perspective of established tonal theory. Franklin seems to have followed a broad trend toward assuming that a key signature was inherently artificial – that music was actually more natural when represented in C major than in any other key.<sup>12</sup> At least for the sake of argument, then, Franklin apparently took for granted that since the ancient minstrels were natural and primitive, their harps would run in the diatonic key of C.<sup>13</sup> From here, Franklin speculated to explain the frequent skips of a third in Scottish music. Since he hazarded that the harps of the old minstrels must have covered two octaves from C to C, “without any Half Notes [i.e. semitones] but those in the natural [i.e. diatonic] scale” (164), this state of affairs could explain why the “really ancient” Scottish tunes have not “a single artificial half note” (164). Franklin reckoned that for convenience of vocal tessitura, the singers often used the key of F, and hence skipped from A to C, since the harp had no B $\flat$  to serve as the fourth scale-degree (164). We do not need to share in Franklin’s assumption that the harps were pitched in C to see his point: whatever absolute key a harp was tuned in, if it did use a diatonic scale (which seems likely<sup>14</sup>), strings might indeed have been passed over when transposing songs to different tonics, to avoid creating different octave species.<sup>15</sup> Franklin’s theory thus linked a feature of Scottish music – its frequent use of “gapped” scales – to the “limited” capabilities

<sup>12</sup> By the same logic, the tone of certain scholars suggests that they took it for granted that medieval music must have been sung always at notated pitch, in order to avoid using accidentals. (I.e. ficta would be seen as absolute rather than relative to the modal final.) Hawkins’s discussion of ficta is typical of this confusion: he finds in early ficta “the rudiments of transposition” (Hawkins, *General History*, 2: 392–3). He does note here that transposition can occur without being notated, but he does not indicate whether he believed this actually occurred. In his discussion of the ancient Greek modes, Hawkins explicitly leaves open whether the modes referred to the characters of absolute pitches (as people assign different characters to A major and F major for example), or whether they represented octave species, or both (see *ibid.*, esp. 1: 166).

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that forty years later, John Gunn, working to restore a Scottish harp dating from around 1500, figured it must cover four octaves of the diatonic scale. Naturally he too concluded that the scale must run from C to C, which suggests that Franklin was not alone in jumping to this particular conclusion. (See Gunn, *An Historical Enquiry Respecting the Performance on the Harp in the Highlands of Scotland* [Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne and Co., 1807], 22–4.)

<sup>14</sup> Gunn’s argument (see n. 13) seems convincing here: that since most Scottish and Irish tunes use a modern diatonic scale, or some part thereof, the instrument that played them must have been strung diatonically. (His logic is also based on the actual dimensions and string-hole placement of the instrument he was restoring.) The twentieth-century scholar Francis Collinson accepted Gunn’s conclusion that the harp covered four diatonic octaves (more or less), but was somewhat dubious about the exact pitches chosen by Gunn (Francis Collinson, *The Traditional and National Music of Scotland* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966], 233–4).

<sup>15</sup> In fact, a theory very similar to Franklin’s on several counts appeared quite recently in Stell, “Sources of Scottish Instrumental Music,” 1: 270–3.

of early instruments. In this he laid the ground for many later explanations: tracing scale-types back to instrumental limitations was soon a recurrent trope, though the details would be different, and the content more or less convincing from instance to instance.

Franklin's letter was particularly influential because it received a fantastic circulation. It was quoted at length – several long paragraphs – in the introductory section of the first *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry under “Music.” The letter retained its prominent placement through five successive editions of the encyclopedia, beginning with the second (1778–83) and ending with the sixth (1823–4). *Britannica* was, after all, a Scottish publication, and Franklin was a foreigner enthusiastically endorsing the Scottish tunes by declaring that they would “probably live forever.” Because of the letter's exposure, Franklin's dilettantish musing would become a staple reference in the later discourse on Scottish modality (though unlike Burney's use of Rousseau's specimen, Franklin's details were to be refuted as often as they were supported). Franklin's lasting influence lay not only in his development of a theory about instrumental limitations to explain specific characteristics of Scottish music, but also in his adumbration of the later discussion of scales.

Franklin did not systematize his observations; but part of the process of integrating Scottish music into a larger causal, comparative picture was curbing the vagueness of previous observations, and Sir John Hawkins seemed compelled by the demands of writing a *General History* of music to fill in details. In a discursive footnote Hawkins summarized his observations, giving more specificity than any previous writer:

The ancient Scotch tunes seem to consist of the pure diatonic intervals, without any intermixture of those chromatic notes, as they are called, which in the modern system divide the diapason into twelve semitones; and in favour of this notion it may be observed that the front row of a harpsichord will give a melody nearly resembling that of the Scots tunes. But the distinguishing characteristic of the Scots music is the frequent and uniform iteration of the concords, more especially the third on the accented part of the bar, to the almost total exclusion of the second and the seventh; of which the latter interval it may be remarked, that it occurs seldom as a semitone, even where it precedes a cadence; perhaps because there are but few keys in which the final note is preceded by a natural semitone; and this consideration will also furnish the reason why the Scots tunes so frequently close in a leap from the key-note to the fifth above. The particulars above remarked are obvious in those two famous tunes Katherine Ogie and Cold and raw, which are unquestionably ancient, and in the true Scots style.<sup>16</sup>

Franklin's letter had not yet been published in the encyclopedia, and while it is thus unlikely that Hawkins knew of it, the Englishman

<sup>16</sup> Hawkins, *General History*, 4: 4n.

displays here the same set of underlying assumptions – and also some of the same observations – as Franklin had.

Like Franklin, Hawkins considered the triadic construction underlying the tunes, though he did not speculate about the cause of this feature. Also like Franklin, Hawkins observed that there were no “modern” chromatic notes in the “true Scots style.” And he went further, tentatively explaining the frequent flat sevenths in Scottish music by pointing out that “there are but few keys in which the final note is preceded by a *natural* semitone” (emphasis mine). This suggests once again, though less explicitly, that instrumental capabilities were a limiting factor in tonal systems: a fixed-pitch instrument that played the diatonic scale (or, like a bagpipe, a similarly limited collection of pitches) can only play raised leading-tones for a couple of potential finals.

Hawkins’s footnote displays some of the ideological framework that would drive Burney; yet, tellingly, Hawkins’s discussion of Scottish music falls not in his early discussion of “ancient” and “Oriental” musics, but in his penultimate volume – as part of a discussion of the styles of composed music in different nations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here it is useful to recall that while Hawkins acknowledges that there were “popular melodies of Scotland . . . propagated by tradition” before James I’s reign in the early fifteenth century (4: 4), these melodies were not really what he discussed under the banner of “Scottish music”; his primary concern is rather with James I himself. Though he never unequivocally commits himself to James I’s sole personal role in creating the distinct Scottish style, he seems to take Tassoni’s word on the matter without much skepticism. In other words, Hawkins still conceives of a “national music” composed by skilled individuals (written down at the time of composition) and eventually entering oral tradition – rather than a collective “folk” effort. He would class most Scottish songs not as a separate category of music, but as “lost” compositions akin to any other country’s composed music from the period of the minstrels. Where later writers would be more concerned with the phenomenon of national music in general, Hawkins was primarily concerned with explaining a *specific* national phenomenon: why Scottish (and to a lesser extent Irish) styles were apparently the only ones that could be differentiated from the relatively universal style of Flemish, Italian, German, French and English music in the Renaissance (see 4: 1). Since the folk had not yet become a clear primitive Other, Scotland still enters into Hawkins’s discussion of style rather than his discussion of music’s supposed pre-history.

The writings on Scottish music that came later would build on some of the descriptive details in Hawkins and Franklin, but they would also erase others. This was because, beginning with Burney, the “natural” qualities in Scottish music came more fully to represent something

larger: a category of organic music that spanned time and geographic space. This tremendously compelling idea – whether still called “national music” or, later, “folk music” – came to be a guiding paradigm, encompassing more connections and more comparisons, and at a more fundamental level, than Burney himself probably imagined. By streamlining and (over)simplifying – by joining the folk to the usual stock of natural Others – the new framework helped to slot Scottish music into a convenient and ideologically powerful typology, to give it a strong place in a “universal history” of music. For the next fifty or sixty years, extrapolations of Burney’s own claims became ever more sweeping, but also took on a tunnel vision.<sup>17</sup> Franklin’s and Hawkins’s references to many “Scottish” melodic characteristics would be forgotten or brushed aside if they went beyond descriptions of general “natural” scale-types, or if they were otherwise too localized to Scotland. To scholars infused with a new zeal for uncovering the universal connections between nature and the “primal” phases of music around the Earth, such localization and precise description would become secondary, or even a hindrance.

### **An ancient and Oriental modality**

Charles Burney’s musical history was a seminal work in so many respects that it is little wonder his writing should have provided the real jumping-off point for a long discourse on Scottish music, and folk and art music in general. Burney’s remarks about Scottish modality came in the context of a new theory covering a topic of long-established interest to scholars across Europe: the music of ancient Greece. Countless writers since the Middle Ages had offered conflicting views on the music of the Greeks, and Burney entered into the debate with humble disclaimers about how little could really be known of the music of times past; he could even be quite hard on others for presuming to draw definite conclusions from the scanty patchwork of extant documents.<sup>18</sup> The irony is that Burney delivered his own most important innovation on the subject, a reinterpretation of a passage of Plutarch concerning the enharmonic genus, with great relish and

<sup>17</sup> Only two notable essays on Scottish music continued to consider theoretical details during or shortly after the appearance of Burney’s work, but without reference to Burney. One was Tytler’s “Dissertation on the Scottish Music.” The other, which contains more detailed speculation about modality, was the Preface to Patrick MacDonald, *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs: Never hitherto Published: To which are Added a Few of the Most Lively Country Dances or Reels, of the North Highlands and Western Isles, and Some Specimens of Bagpipe Music* (Edinburgh: Corri and Sutherland, [1784]), esp. 5.

<sup>18</sup> See for example Burney, *General History*, 1: 36. Parenthetical citations in the following section of text refer to Burney’s history.



conviction – despite its many assumptions and speculative leaps of logic.<sup>19</sup> By the end of his discussion (1: 34–42), Burney had cast aside his disclaimers, sounding quite convinced by his own rhetoric. When he expressed his “wish to leave in the mind of [his] reader something, at least, *like an idea to fasten upon*” (1: 42, italics original) he could hardly have foreseen how many writers would indeed “fasten upon” his idea and expand it.

As with Hawkins before him, Burney’s guiding narrative trajectory is one of “progress” throughout his universal history – a constant process of refinement in the “science” and “art” of music. From Burney’s historiographical perspective, advancing civilization would always bring advancement and improvement in music. Indeed, despite his deep respect for (and constant references to) Rousseau as a musical authority, Burney is no mid-century-type crusader for the simple and natural.<sup>20</sup> He dismisses the adulation of the old for its own sake, and is equally skeptical of those who went overboard in censuring modern ornaments and other “refinements.” “[S]implicity in melody,” he says, “beyond a certain limit, is unworthy of the name that is bestowed upon it, and encroaches so much upon the rude and savage boundaries of uncouthness and rusticity, as to be wholly separated from proportion and grace, which should alone characterize what is truly simple in all the arts . . .” (2: 382). With an honorary bow to the still fashionable cult of simplicity in art, but also a gentle rebuke, he continues: “for though [the arts] may be enobled by the concealment of labour and pedantry, they are always degraded by an alliance with coarse and barbarous nature” (2: 382). In specific cases, too, Burney comes down hard on older music. “Sumer is icumen in” is taken to task for parallel fifths and other “errors.” Burney presents it to show the “state of Harmony in our country about the fourteenth or fifteenth century” (2: 406, 411); and obviously the “state” to which he referred was in his mind quite backward, because he also refers to the period as the “semi-barbarous ages” (2: 404). With specific regard to modal systems, Burney had a clear preference for the modern too,

<sup>19</sup> In fact, Burney took many of his ideas in this passage, and even much of his wording, from his friend Thomas Twining, who in the summer of 1774 gave to Burney a manuscript outlining his own interpretation. Burney felt that Twining’s ideas fitted so well with his own, and even provided him with further insights for his general framework, that he apparently recalled his pages on the enharmonic genus from the printer in order to rewrite them. Twining insisted he should not be given credit, and the ideas entered the discourse bearing Burney’s name and with the weight of Burney’s authority attached to them. See Lonsdale, *Charles Burney*, 148–9, 161–3, and 491–2; and *The Letters of Dr. Charles Burney*, ed. Alvaro Ribeiro, SJ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 1: 168–9.

<sup>20</sup> See the relevant discussion in Grant, *Burney as Critic and Historian*, 30–1.



calling the “eight modes in the Canto Fermo” “mutilated and imperfect scales” and even accusing them of having “injured melody” (2: 166n.).

Ancient Greek music was problematic for Burney; it did not sit easily in his teleological progression of music from the primitive to the well-civilized and modern, at least not if one wanted to take into account the supposed great strides of Greek civilization. About the Greek melodies that had been recently reconstructed by Pierre Jean Burette,<sup>21</sup> Burney inveighs:

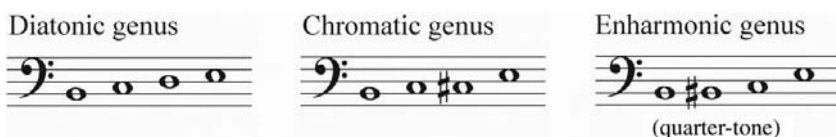
I know not what justice has been done to these melodies; all I can say is, that no pains have been spared to place them in the clearest, and most favorable point of view: and yet, with all the advantages of modern notes and modern measure, if I had been told they came from the Cherokees, or the Hottentots, I should not have been surprised at their excellence. There is music that all mankind, in civilized countries, would allow to be good; but these fragments are certainly not of that sort: for with all the light that can be thrown upon them, they still have but a rude and inelegant appearance, and seem wholly unworthy of so ingenious, refined, and sentimental a people as the Greeks ... The most charitable supposition that can be admitted concerning them is, that the Greek language being itself music, wanted less assistance from sound than one that was more harsh and rough ... (1: 103–4)

Burney resolved his dilemma by applying a biological metaphor that was becoming increasingly common at the time – allowing Greek music itself to have had different stages: “[I]t is natural to suppose as Greek music, like other arts, and other things, must have had its [own] infancy, maturity, and decrepitude” (1: 439).

Burney only needed to find some evidence of this relative primitivism and progress within Greek music, and Plutarch came to the rescue with his discussion of the “enharmonic genus.” This genus had caused difficulty for scholars attempting to reconstruct Greek music because of its famous “diesis” or quarter-tone. Burney considered that element the most advanced, or “artful,” element of Greek music, but he construed Plutarch’s passage on the subject to show that there was a primitive precursor to the familiar (“modern”) enharmonic genus – which he called the “Old Enharmonic.” Looking at the conventional “modern” enharmonic genus from a novel angle, Burney focused not on the quarter-tone itself but on how it created a “gap” in the scale. Since the Greek tetrachord (i.e. the instrument) had only four strings, and its outer pitches needed to span a perfect fourth, the progression B-B- $\sharp$ (quarter-tone)→C $\flat$ →E was empty between C and E (42). (See Example 3.)

<sup>21</sup> See Pierre Jean Burette, *Memoires sur la musique antique* (Paris, 1726–41).

Example 3: The three genres as presented in Burney (*General History*, 1: 30).



Here is another theory of instrumental limitation leading to a gapped scale; but Burney is hardly finished. As he understands Plutarch, the *Old* Enharmonic was also notable for its gaps, only it did not yet include the quarter-tone. Based on an assumption that the Dorian mode described by Plutarch was equivalent to “our” D natural minor (including the Bb), Burney offers the following scale for the Old Enharmonic genus: D→Bb→A→F→E→D in descending form (see Example 4).<sup>22</sup>

Example 4: Burney’s “Old Enharmonic” scale (*General History*, 1: 37).



Enter Scotland: immediately after producing this calculation, Burney exclaims: “Now this is exactly the old Scots scale in the minor key.”<sup>23</sup> Certainly, Burney’s conception of a “minor” “old Scots” scale was quite peculiar. Hawkins and Franklin had discussed the prominence of the diatonic scale, often with leaps or “gaps,” in Scottish music, and from Burney’s tone we can assume that by the time he was writing this had distilled into a notion circulating at least orally of an “old Scots scale” – a pentatonic collection which, when arranged as a “gapped” major scale (as the black keys on the piano ascending from F#), would be “missing” the fourth and seventh degrees. What is stranger is that Burney posited a parallel “minor” version of this “old Scots scale” – with the gaps in the same places (fourth and seventh degrees) but with

<sup>22</sup> He reconstructed this version of the scale based on two conjunct tetrachords. When he reckons on disjunct rather than conjunct tetrachords, he finds A→F→E→D→Bb→A, but he notes that these two scales are rearrangements of the same gamut (Burney, *General History*, 1: 37).

<sup>23</sup> Burney, *General History*, 1: 37. Even on pp. 40–1, where Burney gives some qualifications about the ambiguities in his calculations, he is able to brush them aside. He concludes that no matter how one calculates exactly, *some* notes were skipped, rendering it “highly probable, that the cast of the old national Greek airs was much like that of the old Scots music.”

the third and sixth degrees lowered. (This is different from the "relative minor" arrangement of the piano black keys, based on D $\sharp$ /E $\flat$ , with "gaps" at the second and sixth degrees.) Burney's odd scale does not really exist in Scottish music (in fact it requires some of the same chromatic half-steps whose absence in Scottish songs writers had earlier remarked); and I highly doubt it had ever been discussed before. Rather than being an accurate way of describing Scottish music, Burney's minor pentatonic resulted from a calculation about Greek music, and was conceived as a tool for forging an all-important conceptual link between the ancients and the Scottish folk, based on a Platonic ideal – probably formed through misunderstanding in the first place – of a scale *defined* by the lack of fourth and seventh degrees. Where Franklin had based his findings at least partially on his empirical experience, Burney was more interested in abstractions.

To understand where Burney's abstracted ideal scale came from, we must turn to the Orientalist music theory already well established in the decades just before Burney was writing. Whereas until the eighteenth century, Western theory had viewed "Eastern" music as *un-natural* and abhorrent compared to the European system, the rise of Orientalism alongside the other anthropological disciplines led to the recasting of Eastern musics (like "ancient music") in the typical new role of primitive Other – and connections were drawn to show these musics as united in their "natural" qualities.<sup>24</sup> Most relevantly: in France a tradition was established linking ancient Greek music to Chinese;<sup>25</sup> and Burney was familiar with its most important writings.

One of the most important precedents was Rameau, who had traced both the Chinese and Pythagorean gamuts to the "triple progression," one of the scientific fundamentals of music that he considered

<sup>24</sup> Marin Mersenne's *Harmonie universelle* (Paris: S. Cramoisy, 1636–7), and Kircher's *Musurgia Universalis* (Rome: Francesci Corbelletti, 1650) had compared European music to Turkish music (the closest and most physically present "Eastern" music for seventeenth-century Europeans) and found the former more "natural" by virtue of its diatonicism, hence superior to the Eastern music with its quarter tones and other "abhorrent" intervals. (See Harrison, "Western Attitudes," 6–7, for a discussion of this.) With the reconception of the Orient as primitive *Ursprung* for European civilization, Chinese music became the prominent example because it was (at least in theory) based on the anhemitonic pentatonic collection that came to represent primal nature; still, by the end of the seventeenth century even the more problematic Turkish music came to be seen as a relic of ancient practice preserved in the present, by writers such as Charles Perrault. For examples of this reception history, see Thomas Betzwieser, *Exotismus und "Türkenoper" in der französischen Musik des Ancien Régime: Studien zu einem ästhetischen Phänomen* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1993), 62–4.

<sup>25</sup> See Jim Levy, "Joseph Amiot and Enlightenment Speculation on the Origin of Pythagorean Tuning in China," *Theoria* 4 (1989), 63–88; and Harrison, "Western Attitudes."

universal.<sup>26</sup> (This was a series of tones, each triple the frequency of the previous one, resulting in stacked twelfths, considered as fifths. After twelve terms, the progression produced all twelve pitch-classes of a chromatic octave; furthermore, any five consecutive terms of this progression, when arranged in close position, give the pattern of a gapped, anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the piano black keys.) However, while Rameau had introduced a potential link between the Greek and Chinese systems – suggesting a natural basis for the certain scales in the triple progression – he conceded that the two nations had used the progression to create very different theoretical structures, since they had had little or no contact.<sup>27</sup>

Later writers seeking universal natural connections appreciated Rameau's work as a beginning, but of course they could not leave the matter where Rameau had. In his *Mémoire sur la musique des anciens*, Rameau's disciple the Abbé Roussier asserted that Rameau had misunderstood both the Greek tetrachord and the Chinese gamut.<sup>28</sup> By Roussier's own calculations, the Greek tetrachord was the tones E→B→A→E descending, and the Chinese scale represented a further "development" of this system, with two additional tones filled in, giving a pentatonic scale arranged E→D→B→A→G→E descending (see Example 5). Roussier's formulations helped create a more monolithic idea of "natural" music that could fit into a universal history. In relating all of his calculations back to the triple progression, Roussier took pride in having found the connections where Rameau had failed: "here we can find all the relations we could want between the system of the Chinese, that of Pythagoras, and what Rameau calls the tetrachord."<sup>29</sup> And Roussier went on, claiming that both the Greek and Chinese systems were the fragmented remains of a more complete system – that of the ancient Egyptians, which he believed had embodied the triple progression in full.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, all "modern" music was based on further extensions of the same system. Thus Roussier fulfilled within a history of music theory the Orientalist narrative of culture moving from East to West.

<sup>26</sup> See Rameau, *Code de musique pratique* (Paris: de l'imprimerie Royale, 1760), 191; Levy, "Joseph Amiot," 65–71; and Harrison, "Western Attitudes," 9. See also André Schaeffner, "L'Orgue de Barbarie de Rameau," in *Mélanges d'histoire et d'esthétique musicales, offerts à Paul-Marie Masson* (Paris: Richard-Masse-Editeur, 1955), 2: 135–50, esp. 145–6.

<sup>27</sup> Rameau, *Code*, 224 and 227.

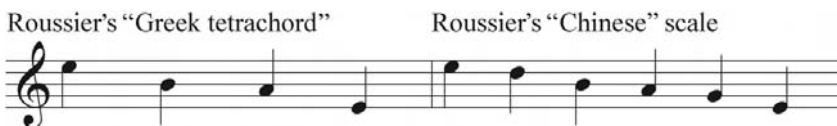
<sup>28</sup> Abbé Roussier, *Mémoire sur la musique des anciens* (Paris: Lacombe, 1770), esp. 14–15, 32–4, and 114. See also Levy, "Joseph Amiot," 71–5.

<sup>29</sup> "L'on trouvera tous les rapports qu'on pourroit désirer entre les système des Chinois, celui de Pythagore, et ce que Rameau appelle le tetracorde" (*Mémoire*, 114).

<sup>30</sup> See Levy, "Joseph Amiot," 73–5, for a good summary of Roussier's conclusions.

## The invention of “folk music” and “art music”

Example 5: Roussier’s reconstructions; see *Mémoire sur la musique des anciens* (1770), 14–15, 32–4, 114.



Burney latched onto Roussier’s universalizing mentality, but took it still further.<sup>31</sup> Having already equated the “old Scots scale” to the Greek “Old Enharmonic” scale, Burney completed his trio of “ancient,” “natural” scales by asserting that “The Chinese scale . . . is certainly very Scottish”; and “no music composed from such a scale . . . will not remind us of the melody of Scotland.”<sup>32</sup> Though he internalized Roussier’s historical narrative, when it came to describing the Chinese scale itself Burney preferred Rameau’s version (C→D→E→G→A→C, or, transposed, G→A→B→D→E→G vs. Roussier’s E→G→A→B→D→E in ascending forms; see Example 6); it worked better to make his point. Stating his preference for Rameau’s scale over Roussier’s, Burney admitted that Roussier’s *argument* was compelling, but that “Rameau’s interpretation is the more *probable* and natural scale, because, like the Scots, and the *Old Enharmonic*, it leaves out the fourth and seventh of the key” (1: 37–8, italics original). And what is called on to verify his claim that Rameau’s is the true Chinese scale? None other than the specimen from Rousseau’s *Dictionnaire*. Burney notes that in this example, “the fourth and seventh of the key are scrupulously missed throughout”; only, in order to prove his point, Burney must suggest that the unfortunate Fs (the flat sevenths) in measure 3 are likely the result of an engraver’s error (1: 38).<sup>33</sup>

Example 6: Rameau’s old Chinese scale, as accepted by Burney, vs. Roussier’s scale (see *General History*, 1: 37–8).



<sup>31</sup> In the “Additional notes” (*General History*, 1: 507), Burney uses Roussier specifically to establish interconnections between Greek, Chinese, Egyptian and Scottish scales. Like Roussier and many of the musical Orientalists, Burney also puts the very earliest establishment of music in ancient Egypt, “a country, in which all human intelligence seems to have sprung” (*General History*, 1: 199).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 41 and 38. He adds that Dr. Lind resided several years in China and assured him that “all the melodies he had heard there, bore a strong resemblance to the *old Scots tunes*” (*ibid.*, 38).

<sup>33</sup> In fact, the Fs do indeed appear to be an error, though Burney did not apparently take the time to check the Du Halde. In that source, the two notes read G→E instead of F→F. The rhythm of this measure is also mistranscribed in the Rousseau; it is dotted in the Du Halde.

While his reasoning was a masterpiece of tautology at every step, the implications of Burney's connections must have been electrifying at the time. He connected and simplified the discussions of scale development drawn from French Orientalist music theory, making them more accessible and more forceful, and then added his own layer. In the conclusion to his discussion of the Old Enharmonic genus, Burney states outright that the pentatonic scale with no fourth and seventh degree is closer to nature, hence *prior* to later, less "deficient" scales; and, having asserted the similarity between the ancient Greek, Chinese and Scottish music, he concludes:

It is not my intention to insinuate by this that the one nation had its music from the other, or that either [China or Scotland] was obliged to ancient Greece for its melody; though there is a strong resemblance in all three. The similarity however, at least proves them all to be more natural than they at first seem to be, as well as more ancient. The Chinese are extremely tenacious of old customs, and equally enemies to innovation with the ancient Aegyptians, which favours the idea of the high antiquity of this simple music; and as there is reason to believe it very like that of the most ancient Greek melodies, it is not difficult to suppose it to be a species of music that is natural to a people of simple manners during the infancy of civilization and arts among them. (1: 41)

This passage would tantalize later writers; it offered sure-footed assertions alongside innuendo and avenues for further exploration. In Burney's own words, he wanted to leave his reader a clear idea to "fasten upon," and he did: it was that the simplicity and the natural quality of all the systems under consideration indicated their extreme antiquity, their ties to the organic "infancy" of civilization and arts. Rather than needing to trace specific influences across cultures, Burney could resort to the fact that one scale was natural – and thus appeared universally in many different places before refinements arrived. Perhaps the most important allure of this passage lay in the way Burney brought the Orient, or the relics of antiquity, to Europe's own recognized "primitive" backwater, the mountains of Scotland. In pulling Greece, China and Scotland together, he was apparently dealing with the "ancient" in all three cases, but the line between current and ancient music in the Scottish and Chinese cases is always ambiguous in his writing.<sup>34</sup> With Scottish music, Burney did not distinguish between the ancient and the modern at all. As an example of "national music" Scottish music was inherently an ancient phenomenon preserved in

<sup>34</sup> See also Burney's article "Chinese Music" in Abraham Rees's *Cyclopaedia* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1819), vol. 7, unpaginated. Gramit notes that German accounts of Chinese and other "Oriental" music also blurred the past and present on a regular basis (*Cultivating Music*, 59–60).

modern times. Later writers would offer specific theories about how this musical preservation had come about, but Burney was already taking it for granted.

His great accomplishment was to fuse for posterity, in technical musical terms, three different kinds of primitive Others: the ancients, the Easterners, and now the “folk” closer to home – suggesting that “nature” could be preserved as modality even in Western Europe among isolated groups. In Burney’s original outline plan for his history, and in more than one place early on in his first volumes, he promised to devote a later chapter to “national music” across a geographical span.<sup>35</sup> Though this chapter never materialized in the actual history, it is clear that what Burney calls national music is already essentially what would come to be known as “folk” music. It is tied to the earth through primal human nature and through organic metaphors of the life cycle, and it is poised both as the origin and in some ways the opposite of “modern” musical “art.” Burney was no champion of national music – in fact he distinguished it from “real music” (2: 220), but he established for the later champions of the folk a musical system to build on, an idea to “fasten upon.”

### **Today Scotland, tomorrow the world**

To Burney must ultimately be given the credit for establishing the idea of a folk modality. He set an avalanche in motion: his views and specific statements were echoed as the pentatonic scale – always “missing” the fourth and seventh degrees – was now sought and found in more and more locations. Since the urge to catalogue a new modality for European folk music, as a foil to common-practice tonality, was essentially an Orientalist project – or at the very least a project analogous to Orientalism at a profound level – British Orientalists were among the earliest important voices spreading the idea of a universal folk scale. They knew the sound of “Scottish” music, and also studied the sounds of the “East,” so they were well placed to comment on the supposed similarities. Additionally, when they turned to music, the early Orientalist philologists and explorers, such as William Jones and the brothers Gore and William Ouseley, relied on Rousseau, Burney, and John Wallis for their understanding of “ancient” music in general<sup>36</sup> – another reason why they tended to echo Burney’s connections. Offhand

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 3, n. 55.

<sup>36</sup> See for example William Jones, “On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos,” repr. in Ethel Rosenthal, *The Study of Indian Music and its Instruments* (London: New Temple Press, [1928]), 157–204.



comments about the similarities between Scottish and Oriental or ancient music multiplied in this field from the 1780s onward.<sup>37</sup>

Some of Burney's specific ideas permeated so deeply that they seem to have been accepted into wide general circulation without being attached to his name. There were various uncredited reiterations of Burney's ideas, and even his words, within Britain,<sup>38</sup> but an example of this effect from further afield is the Scottish travel diary of Louis Albert Necker de Saussure, a professor of geology at the university in Geneva.<sup>39</sup> Primarily a geological survey, the three-volume work includes large sections on culture, politics, economics, poetry, and music. Saussure's dilettantism shows through in parts of his musical discussion, and some of his information is downright wrong.<sup>40</sup> But for a non-professional he gives fairly detailed theoretical accounts of Scottish modality. Saussure observes – a commonplace by the time he was writing around 1820 – that the Highlanders demonstrate surprising links with “the old peoples of the Orient,” not only with regard to music, but in patriarchal and military systems, dress, weapons, customs, language, and poetry.<sup>41</sup> Saussure never mentions Burney, but when he gets around to musical discussion, he uses Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot's discussion of Chinese music to draw continuous comparisons and analogies between Scottish and Chinese scales.<sup>42</sup> Like Burney, Saussure argues that all of the oldest Scottish tunes are purely pentatonic. In fact, Saussure goes into even greater detail: to figure out what “key” a tune is in, one does not look at

<sup>37</sup> For example, see Ouseley's essay on Indian music, and also a letter of William Jones, both published in *Oriental Collections* (London: Cooper and Graham, 1797–8), 1: 70–9, and 2: 55–6.

<sup>38</sup> Two other authors who reiterated specific ideas from Burney without citing him are G. F. Graham, who in his *Account of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1816) writes about the gapped quality of the ancient Greek Dorian mode (141), an idea that he must have distilled from Burney; and William Crotch, who also discusses gapped scales in various music, reprints the Chinese example from Rousseau, and even apes Burney almost word for word that the Chinese are “remarkably tenacious of old customs, which favors the idea of the high antiquity of their music,” although Crotch does not mention Burney by name either. (Crotch, *Specimens*, 1: 13; cf. Burney, *General History*, 1: 41). Unlike Burney, Crotch, assuming that “national music . . . is . . . the remains, or at least a close imitation, of the music of the ancients” (*Lectures*, 67–8), actually suggests that the shared scale “seems to prove that they [Chinese, Scottish music, etc.] had one common origin.”

<sup>39</sup> *Voyage en Ecosse et aux Iles Hebrides*, 3 vols. (Geneva and Paris: J. J. Paschoud, 1821).

<sup>40</sup> For example, Saussure's discussion of the Highland bagpipe speaks of drones on G, B, and G, while all Highland pipes have their drones only on octave As. This error finds its way into the article on the bagpipe in Schilling's *Encyclopädie der gesammten musikalischen Wissenschaften: oder, Universal-Lexikon der Tonkunst* (Stuttgart: F. H. Köhlner, 1835–8), which quotes Saussure as a source (6: 113).

<sup>41</sup> *Voyage*, 1: xxv.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 457–71. (See also J.-J.-M. Amiot, *Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages, &c. des Chinois* (Paris: Chez Nyon, 1776–1814), vol. 6.

the “key signature” of a transcription, but rather at which pitches are missing. From this, one can deduce the “tonic,” knowing that the gaps would be the fourth and seventh degrees above that note.<sup>43</sup> Because, like Burney, Saussure actually *defines* the “primitive” pentatonic system by the lack of a fourth and seventh degree, he is one of the very few other writers to posit a *parallel* “minor” pentatonic mode with no fourth or seventh degree (this scale would be rejected by Scots writing about their own music).<sup>44</sup> Where (and whether) Saussure heard Scottish music he never makes clear. He apparently examined Patrick MacDonald’s *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* from 1784,<sup>45</sup> but it is almost impossible to find examples in this or other collections that conform to such a minor pentatonic scale. It is feasible that Saussure got his idea of this scale from Burney directly without acknowledging the English writer, but just as likely that Burney’s ideas had filtered into oral circulation by this time, and Saussure could have picked these up in conversation with musicians he met on his travels – or even at home on the Continent.

In order for Burney’s ideas to have become so commonplace, it would have been necessary for his actual discussion to have been widely cited and discussed in the discourse, and this indeed proves to be the case: most sources acknowledged Burney’s influence explicitly. Going back to about 1790, we can see this trend already beginning in a short anonymous “Essay on the Scots Music” prefaced to the collection *The Caledonian Muse*, published in London.<sup>46</sup> The collection, which contains both Highland and Lowland airs, is another eighteenth-century attempt to bridge these two styles, bringing them together to assert a

<sup>43</sup> *Voyage*, 3: 448.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 450–1. One later German scholar, G.W. Fink, also believed in the scale, but clearly only based on Saussure and Burney, both cited openly. The only Scottish writer to take the Burney/Saussure minor pentatonic scale at all seriously was Francis Collinson, who mentions Saussure’s description of the scale, even suggesting that it may relate to the bagpipe scale. Collinson finds a single example of a Scottish tune that can (with a very healthy stretch of the imagination) be made to approach (vaguely) this scale pattern (see Collinson, *Traditional and National Music*, 115–18). But Collinson himself admits he can find no other example using such a scale; and the contortions he has to put his only example through in order to use it suggest that even it could not be said to have an underlying “minor pentatonic” structure.

<sup>45</sup> See *Voyage*, 3: 446. MacDonald, in his Preface, suggests that “the airs which differ most in their structure from the modern music, and to which it is most difficult to adapt a regular bass, are those which appear to be in the minor mode” (*Highland Vocal Airs*, 5). So it is just possible that Saussure drew his ideas from a misunderstanding of MacDonald’s explanation of the pentatonic Scottish scale. Still, if one reads carefully (*ibid.*, 5–6), it is clear that MacDonald is referring (as would other Scottish writers discussed below) to an anhemitonic relative minor (missing second and sixth degrees) rather than parallel minor (missing fourth and seventh and with lowered third and sixth) pentatonic scale.

<sup>46</sup> Printed for the editors [S. A. and P. Thompson] at Warehouse No. 75, St. Paul’s Yard, c. 1790. Parenthetical citations in the next two paragraphs refer to this book.

common Scottish identity. By now, however, the trait defining that Scottish identity – its “beautiful simplicity” (4) – is seen as part of the global phenomenon called “national music”; that term had already become a commonplace needing little definition. When the author here recommends a loose approach to rhythm in “performance of most national music, and particularly the Scottish” (5), Scottish music clearly represents a broader concept. The writer hopes the collection will give insight into the “early state” of the art of music, “from the analogy constantly to be observed between the original manners of a people and their native Music” (5). This essay still traces the origin of Scottish music, again as with “most national music,” to the bards (1). Perhaps as a consequence, the author remains quite ambivalent about what to make of the similarities Burney had noted. The idea that the scale was the result of the limitations of early instruments is gently brushed aside, suggesting some deeper aesthetic conviction behind the gapped scales:

One of the most obvious peculiarities of Scottish music is the affected omission of certain notes of the scale, particularly the 4th and 7th, and almost any other interval [i.e. scale-degree]. This has been accounted for from the supposed contractedness of ancient instruments; it seems, however, too great a beauty to ascribe to such a cause; and it is singular enough that the same peculiarity is not only to be observed in some Irish airs, but even in the Chinese Music; and Dr. Burney has conjectured, from a curious passage in Plutarch’s *Dialogues* that this was the *original* enharmonic scale of the Greeks.<sup>47</sup>

By breaking off the discussion at this point, the anonymous author does not really commit to an interpretation of Burney – and because he has no clear agenda to promote, he still mentions other modal features peculiar to Scotland, such as off-final endings that appear to make a piece “conclude in a different mode from what it begins in,” or on the “4th or 5th of the key” (3).

Soon after this essay was published, Beattie’s theory that the old Scottish tunes originated with the peasants themselves, rather than with royal bards and minstrels, began to gain broader acceptance. With this change, it would be possible to extend Burney’s connections further. Joseph Ritson’s “Historical Essay on Scottish Song” (prefaced to his 1794 collection *Scottish Songs*<sup>48</sup>), which had staunchly echoed Beattie’s theory, helped begin that process. When Ritson cites William Lempriere’s recent tour of Morocco (that writer had claimed that the music of the Barbary Moors bore resemblance to the Scottish), and then moves on to

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, italics original. In the essay there is a citation to Burney and also to Du Halde’s specimens here.

<sup>48</sup> Parenthetical citations in the following portion of the text refer to vol. 1 of this set.

cite Burney’s equation of Scottish and Chinese scales,<sup>49</sup> he has a clearer purpose in mind than the author of the “Essay” in the *Caledonian Muse*. Recall that Ritson suggested an underlying cause for the cross-cultural traits: “Nature and indolence no doubt, will occasionally produce similar effects in very distant and different countries” (xc-xci, in footnote). The folk were coming to have a shared scale around the world, for better or worse.

This idea really came into its own with the work of Alexander Campbell, who was among the first people to travel around Scotland collecting tunes from oral tradition. His theories appear in two places: in his “Conversation on Scotch Song” (1798), which we met in Chapter 2 as an example of the emptying of pastoral convention, and in the Preface to his collection *Albyn’s Anthology* (1816–18).<sup>50</sup> Campbell considered *Albyn’s Anthology* a “National Work” to rescue the “perishing remains of what is so closely interwoven with the history and literature of Scotland” (*Albyn’s Anthology*, 1: ix), which implied that there must be a meaningful and unique essential quality to Scottish music. (Notably, he too dwelt on the similarities rather than the differences between the traditional Highland and Lowland music, collecting them together in a single work and asserting that both owed a greater debt to other Celtic music than to any English influence.<sup>51</sup>) Nonetheless, despite Campbell’s pan-Scottish nationalist undertaking, in his theoretical discussion he was more concerned with the overarching characteristics of “national” music around the world than with establishing what was specifically Scottish. Campbell believed that music among the people was “in all probability, coeval with the Aborigines or first inhabitants” of Britain (*Albyn’s Anthology*, 1: ii); so he outlined a clear distinction between this “national” or “popular” music and the “artful” music of earlier poets and bards (“Conversation,” 15). These established categories were powerful musical-theoretical tools, inchoate in Burney, and not yet fully realized in Ritson. Campbell wielded them with force: they were what allowed him to grant a truly universal status to a folk modal system. He theorized that song originated from nature, beginning with “artless musical intervals” like the “notes of singing-birds” (“Conversation,” 1); and accordingly, the “melodies of savage or barbarous nations” embodied the “voice or breathings of nature” (*Albyn’s Anthology*, 1: ii). Since all folk

<sup>49</sup> “Nay, even in China, a country which has been civilized for ages” the music resembled the old Scots tunes, says Ritson, citing Burney (“Historical Essay,” xci, n.).

<sup>50</sup> The “Conversation,” affixed to the *Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland*, is much more detailed than the later Preface, but its circulation was limited; only ninety copies were printed (see *Introduction*, 5). Meanwhile, the anthology Preface, though considerably distilled, presents Campbell’s argument if anything more clearly and willfully, and it achieved a broader exposure.

<sup>51</sup> See “Conversation,” 19, and *Albyn’s Anthology*, 1: ii.

and primitive music had a common origin in nature, Campbell wanted to believe that it ought to conform to the same modal system.

Over and above its *specific* “national” mission, Campbell’s collection was thus an attempt to understand the general roots of music in *any* country.<sup>52</sup> For Campbell, the idea of a truly universal or *pan*-national folk scale became the central tenet – following through on Burney’s universalizing urge. Quoting about two full pages from the conclusion of Burney’s “Old Enharmonic” analysis (“Conversation,” 3–5), Campbell is not satisfied to stop with Scotland, China, and ancient Greece: he adds a citation from the Orientalist Ouseley, suggesting that the music of *India* too sounded Scottish<sup>53</sup> – and thus he ultimately awards Burney’s pentatonic scale theoretical status as an “essential part of national song” anywhere in the world (“Conversation,” 2). We might wonder, Campbell says, that “melody is nearly the same among all nations, and at correspondent periods or stages of civilization,” but “music being a *universal* language, and the voice of Nature ... the wonder ceases, while the admiration remains, in contemplating the beautiful relics of ancient melody, so elegantly artless ...” (*Albyn’s Anthology*, 1: ii, italics original). It was also Campbell who gave Burney’s pentatonic collection a concrete name: “I have taken the liberty to call [this] the *primary scale of music* ... wherein, in all probability, lay concealed from the ancients, the rudiments of scientific music ...” (“Conversation,” 6n., and 7, italics original). The “nearer a melody approaches this scale” the more it can be reckoned to be “genuine and ancient” (“Conversation,” 7). Indeed, as part of his demonstration of the natural quality of the pentatonic scale, Campbell now places Rousseau’s ubiquitous “Air Chinois” specimen alongside an example from the South Seas, and a short line of bird-song, to emphasize its natural qualities.<sup>54</sup>

Campbell’s influence in naming the pentatonic scale is hard to gauge, however, because a further source eclipsed his work. This was another prefatory essay, affixed to the 1822 edition of George Thomson’s own “National” collection,<sup>55</sup> and probably by Thomson

<sup>52</sup> “You will perceive my main purpose is, to direct your attention to the earliest rudiments of Song, so as to trace its progress, as found in a rude, to a more civilized state of Society; and thus be prepared, to apply a general rule or criterion, by which we shall be enabled to adopt with safety, as genuine reliques of national song, and Scottish song in particular, such fragments of musical compositions, as are handed down to us from remote times” (“Conversation,” 2).

<sup>53</sup> “Conversation,” 3n. In fact Campbell fails to mention that Ouseley is himself quoting another anonymous source. See *Oriental Collections*, 1: 74.

<sup>54</sup> All the examples are in the plates following p. 374 of the *Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland*.

<sup>55</sup> Thomson’s collection had been appearing in countless editions since 1793. This “Dissertation” seems only to have appeared in the condensed two-volume octavo edition called *Select Melodies of Scotland, Interspersed with those of Ireland and Wales* (London and Edinburgh: George Thomson, 1822–3). See Cecil Hopkinson and

himself.<sup>56</sup> Called "Dissertation Concerning the National Melodies of Scotland," the essay presented many of the exact same ideas that Campbell had, though without mentioning Campbell at all. Since *Albyn's Anthology* was endorsed by Walter Scott, and apparently brought some repute to Campbell,<sup>57</sup> it is hard to see how Thomson could go without mentioning Campbell's name. But in any case, the "Dissertation" was the most detailed and technical discussion of modality in Scottish music that had yet appeared, much more specific and more widely cited than Campbell.

As Campbell had, Thomson also distinguishes carefully between "popular or national music" and music "as scientifically studied" (11); and, citing Beattie and Ritson, Thomson attributes the former body of music, at least in Lowland Scotland, to "the pastoral inhabitants of the country" (17).<sup>58</sup> Since, like Campbell, Thomson attributed national music to the "people," he could also use Burney's connections (9–10) to name a universal primitive scale tied to any folk source: it is "the national scale," existing in all nations before the "cultivation of the art" spreads among the people (10).<sup>59</sup> Thomson claims that this "national scale" has "never yet been accurately defined," so either he is truly unfamiliar with Campbell, or a plagiarist, for his "national scale" is exactly the same as Campbell's "primary scale of nature." Even his assertion that the age of a song can be calculated based on how closely it follows the national scale (see 10) mirrors Campbell. In support of his theories, Thomson cites the usual body of evidence, including of course Rousseau's "Air Chinois." (And while Campbell had still explicitly discussed the errant Fs in the specimen as a printer's error, "correcting" them to Gs,<sup>60</sup> Thomson's does

C. B. Oldman, "Thomson's Collections of National Song," *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 2 (1938–9), 20. Parenthetical citations refer to the 1822 edition.

<sup>56</sup> In a letter Thomson appears to claim to have written the dissertation himself: "I have likeways prepared a critical dissertation concerning the antiquity of our Melodies, to be prefixed to the first vol" (London, British Library, Add. MS 35268, f. 84r [a letter to Wm. Smyth of Jan. 1822]). It is interesting that some of the suggestions in the dissertation counter Thomson's insistence in an earlier letter, to Hector MacNeill in 1808, that there was really no way of telling the older airs from the newer ones (London, British Library, Add. MS 35266, ff. 130v–133r).

<sup>57</sup> See Baptie, *Musical Scotland*, 26.

<sup>58</sup> The theory that the works were composed by kings is dismissed because "scientific" music at that time was all harmony and counterpoint and thus "infinitely more remote from popular or national music than it is at the present day" ("Dissertation," 11), though Thomson does allow that some of the "more artificial and less ancient [Scottish] melodies" may have been appended to the stock at a later date by minstrels and harpers (*ibid.*, 17).

<sup>59</sup> Thomson does depart slightly from Campbell by presenting his scale on the pitch C (C→D→E→G→A), presumably assuming as Franklin did that C major was inherently more "natural" – and thus best captured sounds coming from "a very rude and primitive state of society, when music is nothing more than the art of giving utterance to the few elementary tones which are immediately prompted by nature" ("Dissertation," 10).

<sup>60</sup> Campbell, "Conversation," 3n.; and plates following p. 74.



not even bother to mention the Fs, instead claiming conveniently that Rousseau's example "precisely" accords with the "national scale," 9.) Thomson even apes Campbell's universalizing demonstration by attaching several more examples: other Chinese airs, as well as "wild and beautiful airs, strongly resembling our own [i.e. Scottish] ... found in Persia, ... India, ... among the Moors of Barbary, and the natives of North America" (9). Amusingly, both Thomson and Campbell also take Franklin to task for his ignorance of their so-called universal scale: had Franklin known about it, they imply, it would have saved him from having to speculate about harps and the like to understand skips of a third in Scottish music.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, both Thomson and Campbell clearly had enough experience with Scottish music to know that Burney's parallel minor pentatonic scale ( $D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F \rightarrow A \rightarrow Bb \rightarrow D$ ) did not have much basis in any sounding Scottish music. The approach both men took is again similar, and telling: since they knew the sound was not Scottish, they sought to show it was not present in "natural" music at all – whether Greek, Chinese, or otherwise – but rather a mistake in Burney's calculations. (Thomson's grounds for this correction are at least more detailed than Campbell's: they are based on an argument about Burney's misunderstanding of conjunct and disjunct tetrachords in the Greek system, 9–10.<sup>62</sup>) Needless to say, the scale that results when both Campbell and Thomson recalculate the Old Enharmonic mode matches exactly their own "primary" or "national" scale. Campbell did allow for a *relative* minor to the major pentatonic collection  $C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow G \rightarrow A \rightarrow C$  (that is:  $A \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow G \rightarrow A$ , hence no second or sixth degree when compared to the natural minor scale). And he admits this arrangement as a fundamental part of his theory, sitting alongside the "major" as the two versions of the "primary scale."<sup>63</sup> (See Example 7.)

Example 7: Campbell's "Primary scale of music." See *Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland* (1798), Plates following 374, and *Albyn's Anthology* (1816), 1: i.



<sup>61</sup> Campbell believed that the ancient harp would have been strung pentatonically anyway, rather than diatonically from C to C, so he dismisses Franklin's reasoning outright ("Conversation," 23). See also Thomson, "Dissertation," 15.

<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, Thomson considers Burney's error "trivial" next to the greater significance of his thinking ("Dissertation," 10n.). For Campbell's correction, see "Conversation," 5–6n.

<sup>63</sup> See "Conversation," 6n., also diagrams, figures 4–5, and *Albyn's Anthology*, 1: i–ii.



Thomson went further: perhaps the most important original observation in his little dissertation is the ambiguity of the final in some pentatonic music. Because "our primitive musicians . . . wander[ed] up and down the [national] scale . . . stopping on any part of it at pleasure, our old airs are found not always to close on what we call the key-note, but frequently on other parts of the scale; and a greater or lesser degree of wildness is given to the melody, in consequence of its close being more or less different from what we are used to in modern music" (5). Thomson is quite sensitive to the fact that this is a somewhat anachronistic distinction. Although the different finals can "give the airs the appearance of being composed in different keys, and in different modes," this is really an illusion since "their composers had no idea of the distinction of major and minor modes, but were prompted merely by their taste or feeling to rest or close on certain notes of the scale" (5). Several examples are given, ending on different notes of the scale and thus producing apparent gamuts that are missing different degrees (not only CDEGA and the "relative minor" ACDEG, but also DEGAC and EGACD). Though his formulation stemmed from the conviction that all of these gamuts were really only the same "national" scale with different resting-places, Thomson's willingness to accept as problematic the very idea of a real final in this music was truly exceptional; it offered (and still offers) solutions to analytical issues in some modal music. The basic premise that the same pentatonic collection could be arranged in multiple positions (not just Campbell's "major" and "minor," but with the other three notes as potential roots as well) became a central underpinning of modal analyses through the twentieth century.

Thomson's "Dissertation" contains some other real novelties as well – indicative of the new types of speculation that could be spawned by the idea of universal folk scales. Whereas most previous writers had explained "gapped" scales with reference to instrumental limitations, Thomson focuses on the difficulty of singing semitones. In the "modern scale," he observes "the difficulty which untaught singers have in sounding . . . the sharp seventh, particularly in the minor mode. It has often been remarked, too, that the fourth is not easily sung in tune by uneducated singers: And it thus appears, that the notes of the modern scale the most difficult to be sung, are those which involve the interval of the *semitone*" (7). Thus "rustic" musicians, even those "who do not exhibit either want of ear or musical feeling" use the anhemitonic "national scale" (7). The idea itself that it was difficult and "unnatural" to sing semitones, at least leading-tones, was not new at all – Burney among many others had expressed it clearly.<sup>64</sup> But the view of instruments

<sup>64</sup> Regarding Gregorian chant, Burney says, "the vocal organs of the new Christians not having been accustomed to a refined and artificial music, could not easily form the

as the primary reason for progress and expansion of the scale, rather than a principal source of limitations, is idiosyncratic here. It is in fact through the development of instruments with diatonic and even chromatic capabilities that Thomson explains away the potential counter-evidence to his claims that all nations had once shared his scale: the popular airs of Wales, France, Italy, and Spain have now lost their pentatonic nature only because of the introduction of more sophisticated instruments as part of the early “cultivation of the art” of music in these countries (8 and 10).

An apparent paradox surfaces in the work of nationalists such as Campbell and Thomson: as discussions of Scottish music became increasingly intricate and detailed, the same theorists whose nationalist agendas concerned describing and advancing Scottish music in its most essential and unmixed form also became less satisfied to stop at the similarities between China, Greece, and Scotland – as they claimed that the distinguishing characteristics of Scottish music were found everywhere in different primitive cultures. How could it be possible or worthwhile to isolate the “purest” old native characteristics of specifically Scottish melodies when one was going to claim that these traits were not in fact unique to Scotland? The paradox was illusory, however, because what underlay Scotland’s claims to be unique was its supposed retention, or its specifically powerful manifestation, of a stage that had once been universal – that all societies had passed through. The Scots could emphasize Scottishness while at the same time showing that Scottishness represented the natural qualities in humanity, something buried within everyone’s past, a sort of inner child.

This is the same thought process that inspired Herder to coin the word “*Volkslied*” – a term with simultaneously local-ethnic and global connotations similar to those the English term national music was picking up in the work of Burney and his followers. Yet Herder’s anthropological and artistic claims in his writing on *Volkslieder* did not translate directly into musical terms; so when it came to formulating the technical side of folk music, Burney played a larger role than Herder even in Germany. J. N. Forkel quoted Burney’s discussion of the “Old Enharmonic” genus at length in his own universal music history, and extended Burney’s link between Scotland, Greece, and China to include both music from the South Pacific, and, tellingly, “folksongs [*Volksgesänge*] in various areas of

semitones . . . For want of semitones, cadences are made from the flat seventh rising a whole tone, in the same manner as among the Canadians and other savage people. There was no need of great musicians to invent, or superior beings to inspire such melody as this; the priests themselves, who regulated the public worship, might have formed it by mere instinct, as it so much resembles that of a rude and uncivilized people. At present, however, this kind of singing is become venerable from its antiquity, and the use to which it is solely appropriated” (*General History*, 2: 21).

Germany.”<sup>65</sup> Later, Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, editor of the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* from 1828 to 1841, engaged with Burney’s ideas in even more detail, setting out his theories about the spread of the pentatonic scale from China (using Rousseau’s specimen again of course) through Asia and Europe to Scotland, in his book on *The First Migrations of the Earliest Music*.<sup>66</sup> Fink also reiterated his ideas in condensed form in contributions to various well-known German encyclopedias of the time.<sup>67</sup>

By the 1830s then, the potential inherent in Burney’s conclusions was fulfilled. Within Scotland, Campbell and Thomson had vigorously formulated a system of folk modality that was both Scottish-“national” and pan-“national.” It represented nature and natural humanity, a developmental stage. And the idea of folk modality was spreading abroad – with Scottish music still serving as the purest example and *locus classicus*. The folk-modal system that early nineteenth-century writers posited would encounter occasional resistance, and many adjustments and additions; but it has not disappeared today.

### **Credibility and dignity: folk-modal study comes of age**

As the body of writing on Scottish music gained a critical mass, there was room for increasing debate within the discourse, and the general quality of scholarship deepened considerably. One inevitable consequence of this rigor was that some blanket statements needed to be qualified, or even disposed of. Overall, however, the increasingly complicated examinations resulting from this activity tended to reinforce the underlying historiography, while also conferring a new credibility and dignity on the “science” of folk music scholarship. The technical study of folk music really came of age in the 1830s and 1840s: details and vocabulary from this period remained especially vital, paving the way for the explosion of positivistic folk song study and classification from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century.

During the 1830s a new manuscript of seventeenth-century Scottish lute music surfaced, the famous “Skene Manuscript.” William Daune

<sup>65</sup> Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte*, 1: 335–7.

<sup>66</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, *Erste Wanderung der ältesten Tonkunst, als Vorgeschichte der Musik oder als erste Periode derselben* (Essen: Bädker, 1831). Fink’s ideas were actually quite idiosyncratic, since he rigorously supported the idea of a universal pentatonic scale, but rejected the idea that its use across so many cultures was “natural” coincidence (*ibid.*, 114–17); instead he suggested that the scale had originated in ancient China, and spread to India, Greece, and then with the travels of the Celts across Asia and Europe to Scotland (*ibid.*, 140–68). Eventually, he maintained, the scale was replaced by heptatonic scales almost everywhere except at the two poles – China because of tradition, and Scotland because of the physical isolation of the Celts in the Highlands (*ibid.*, 257, 264–9).

<sup>67</sup> See especially Schilling’s musical *Encyclopädie* (for example the article on “Kelten”).

(1800–43), a lawyer and antiquary associated with the “Bannatyne club,” took on the task of commenting on and transcribing the manuscript.<sup>68</sup> His own commentary eventually ran to 210 pages, and he also enlisted the Scottish composer Finlay Dun to write an appendix – a theoretical “Analysis of the Scottish Music.”<sup>69</sup> Dauneý was blessed with both a critical scholarly mind and a large body of knowledge and resources about Scottish music. His investigation into the history of Scottish music was by far the most detailed, credible and enduring that had yet been written. Dauneý weighed the evidence he came across with a sense of responsibility that is quite impressive; he actually seemed to construct his theory around the facts instead of vice versa. His work takes on a dialectical quality, and his conclusions about the shadowy past are always put forth slightly tentatively, despite his confidence in dismissing other scholars’ claims when necessary.

Dauneý did not overturn the historiographical ideology that had led to the idea of the natural scale, but he did put the brakes on the idea that *all* “primitive” music shared the quality of scalar gaps. Where others had gathered examples only of pentatonic music from around the world, or distorted other music into this mold, Dauneý pointed out that semitones were not peculiar to “modern” “artificial” music. He cited chromaticism in Egyptian melodies and in a “Fingo war song,” and even noted microtones in Turkish, Persian and Indian music (190–2). Taking direct issue with quotations from Thomson’s 1822 “Dissertation” and with Campbell, Dauneý concludes: “With these facts before our eyes, we feel it utterly impossible to concur in the generally received opinion as to the existence of ‘a primitive national scale’ consisting of ‘elementary tones prompted by nature’ . . . from which the fourth and seventh of the key are excluded,” and which can be used to test antiquity (192–3). “Dr. Burney originated this error,” says Dauneý, based on the Rousseau specimen and Rameau’s projected Chinese scale (193).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> The latter task he performed in collaboration with G. F. Graham. See Baptie, *Musical Scotland*, 39–40.

<sup>69</sup> Dauneý’s book is called *Ancient Scottish [sic] Melodies from a Manuscript of the Reign of King James VI* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Company, 1838); it includes Dauneý’s own “Preliminary Dissertation,” and Dun’s appendix, as well as facsimiles and transcriptions of the manuscript. Parenthetical citations in the following section of the text refer to this book.

<sup>70</sup> As support for his own skepticism, Dauneý could cite another voice that had recently made itself heard in the *New Edinburgh Review*. There, an anonymous review of the article on “Music” in a recent encyclopedia had provided a good deal of information about “Oriental music,” often showing how much more complicated and diverse it was than many European writers would have it; among the claims disputed is Burney’s notion that Chinese music had no semitones. (“Memoirs of Music,” *New Edinburgh Review*, April 1822, 506–30, esp. 526.) The agenda of the article remains quite “Orientalist,” however: its main point is to show how “In Asia the human race

When tossing out the bath water, however, Dauneý keeps the sacred baby. The universal scale is jettisoned, but the broad concept of "national music" is now a given, and the idealized "natural" folk are retained – even foregrounded to a new degree. Dauneý is clearer than previous Scottish musical writers about the connection between the primitive in general and the folk: as Blair had done in his dissertation on the authenticity of Ossian, Dauneý explicitly extricates the concept of the "primal" from a purely diachronic context, asserting that it is the "*condition of a people as well as . . . the age*" that matters (173, italics original). In Scotland specifically, he believes that "artificial music" has only recently penetrated the land because the inhabitants are still "simple" and "still continue to lighten their toil, and to beguile their leisure," with the same music they have had for centuries; thus "an original, artless air may still spring up spontaneously, as it did of old" (174). Dauneý affirms Burney's claim that "national music" is "as natural to the common people as warbling is to birds in a state of nature" (187). And he suggests what was becoming another staple of the idealist strand of differentiation between folk and art: that folk music is a sort of collective effort born anonymously over time, and shaped by essential cultural traits: "Wherever national music exists, we should consider it to be indigenous – based on the natural constitution and temperament of a nation" (186).<sup>71</sup>

Having rejected the universal scale, though, Dauneý must find some other explanation of such apparently ancient Scottish traits as pentatonicism and the flat seventh. He considers that the frequently "missing" scale-degrees may have something to do with the bagpipes, and with instrumental limitations in general (190), but he is not prepared to stop there, since some of "the most barbarous nations" have chromatic music despite their lack of sophisticated instruments (190n.). So he looks also to a less abstract explanation, abandoning the prehistoric past where those in Campbell's generation had focused their search for answers. Retraining his focus toward a more tangible historical frame, Dauneý zeroes in on plainchant (178). He does glimpse briefly back toward the primeval neverland, conceding that despite the importance of church music, the "wild, irregular, and impassioned" strains of Scotland and Ireland may preserve some of whatever primitive character they contained before the influence of chant (200). But he refutes older claims by Ritson and Campbell that

was first renovated after the deluge; and that rich country may be truly considered as the cradle of knowledge and civilization"; although "the light of science" has passed from East to West recently. "Perhaps, in a few centuries, it may pass away from us to another quarter of the globe, and leave us in our ancient darkness" (*ibid.*, 508).

<sup>71</sup> See also *ibid.*, 188–90. "Nations, as well as individuals, have their peculiar habits and idiosyncrasies" (*ibid.*, 190).

Scottish national music owed nothing to church music (see 39 and 186), and provides instead all sorts of reasons why it makes sense to compare the two: not only was there a long tradition in Scotland of setting secular (and even obscene) ballads to old church hymns, a practice probably dating from well before the Reformation (179), but also, until the seventeenth century, secular music in general seemed to stem from church music, since musical education was the domain of the church (180–6).

Having fleshed out the historical framework behind the stylistic connections he wished to draw, Dauneay called in Dun to fill in the theoretical detail. Perhaps Scotland's best-known native composer from the first half of the nineteenth century, Dun (1795–1853) was born in Aberdeen, the son of a dancing master. A multi-instrumentalist and vocalist, he performed in Naples, studied violin with Pierre Baillot, taught in Edinburgh, and wrote symphonies and glees as well as setting Scottish traditional songs for various collections.<sup>72</sup> Reiterating and supporting the values and background Dauneay had laid down, Dun's twenty-five-page analysis is the longest and most detailed nineteenth-century work devoted entirely to the theory of Scottish music.

Though he believed that Scottish music showed the signs of originating when "the musical scale and musical instruments of the country were yet in an infant state" (315) – because it was "like no other music of the present day" with "its wild, irregular strains" that spoke "of times long past" (316) – Dun, like Dauneay, was not satisfied with the idea of a single primitive, national scale. He writes: "As to the question regarding the Scottish scale, or the so-called scale of nature," the absence of a note from use in a piece does not imply its absence from the known gamut, or range of possible notes. He dislikes the idea that the gapped scale was "imperfect," suggesting instead that gaps might be the result of "design" on the part of the music's creators. He does leave open the idea that the practice was *started* by the "imperfection of certain instruments" (329–30, in long footnote); but its continuation was a matter of "the internal and strongly marked *character*" of "our national music" (323, my italics).<sup>73</sup> Dun isolated other features that were specifically Scottish, without feeling the need to relate them to a universal principle – for example the famous double-tonic effect (the characteristic of melodically outlining alternating chords a whole step

<sup>72</sup> This biographical information is from Baptie, *Musical Scotland*, 48–9, and Farmer, *Music in Scotland*, 494–5.

<sup>73</sup> Whereas, for example, the 1822 "Dissertation" does not even entertain the possibility that people might have chosen to leave out certain notes. It goes so far in the other direction as to suggest that composers cannot imitate the primitive scale when they try, and thus that newer Scottish songs are easily identifiable from genuine older ones when the imitators slip up (*Select Melodies*, 12).



apart common in Scottish music). Saussure and Thomson had (apparently independently) been the first to discuss this in writing, at the start of the 1820s; but they had tied it to their theories about "modulation" in a shared primitive pentatonic scale.<sup>74</sup> Dun framed the double-tonic effect in a more positive light, as an "essential . . . property of Scottish music" (319).

Still, like Dauneý, Dun preserved the idea that Scottish national music was representative of a broad ancient phenomenon, giving insight into the "early history of the art" (339). A universal layer is retained, and as usual this begins to blur the border between what is specifically "national" to Scotland and what is *generally* "national." If Dun did not give much credence to Burney's scale as a primitive universal basis, he certainly found replacements for it. One replacement was rhythm: "The rhythm of Scottish melodies, *like that of all other national music*, is for the most part regular. Indeed, it could not be otherwise, for it is the regular recurrence of the reposes or cadences in the melody which makes the music of the people easily caught and remembered" (324, emphasis mine).

Neither does throwing out the concept of a single "scale of nature" prevent Dun from finding broad "ancient" and "natural" modal qualities in Scottish music – although he certainly adds a good deal of nuance. Dun refers to Alexandre Choron's idea that there are but two basic kinds of tonality, the "ancient" and the "modern" (330).<sup>75</sup> This boils down to a distinction between modal and tonal music, and Dun notes in the former "a wild and plaintive character," an "uncertainty of the key," and a "wandering and apparently irregular style of modulation" (330–1). With this justification, Dun expands considerably on Dauneý's discussion of chant as the closest relative to Scottish national music. In one sweeping rhetorical gesture, he writes:

Scottish music shows its antiquity by its connection with the ancient tonality. And it is remarkable that the more antique the Canto Fermo [i.e. plainchant], the more features of resemblance does it seem to have in peculiarities of tonality (progressions of intervals, modulations, cadences, &c.) in common with the ancient Scottish music. And, as these peculiarities do not appear so strongly marked in what is considered as the national music of other parts of Great Britain, this seems to throw back the origin of the ancient Scottish music to a

<sup>74</sup> See Saussure, *Voyage*, 3: 452–4. Thomson, the first Scot to discuss the "double-tonic," treats it as a specific occurrence of another phenomenon: the flat seventh as a very early "addition" or development to the "national" scale (which Thomson like many others accepts historically; "Dissertation," 5).

<sup>75</sup> The Choron quote is from an English translation of Johann Georg Albrechtsberger's *Methods of Harmony* (London: R. Cocks and Co., [1834]), with Choron's remarks. Dun (like Dauneý) relates the rise of the new tonality to the advent of the "seconda pratica" (*Ancient Scottish*, 335).



period of more remote antiquity than can easily be assigned to any other popular music of our island. And, moreover, if it is true, as many authors assert, that the Canto Fermo is a relic of the old Greek music, or, according to Padre Martini, that it was introduced into the Christian churches by the Apostles, who derived it from the Hebrew synagogues, then we shall find the Scottish music to be of the same lineage as the music of nations of the highest antiquity. (333)<sup>76</sup>

Here the essential and local are once again collapsed into a universal framework. As his predecessors had done, Dun manages to reintroduce a modal link both to the ancient and the Oriental, even without a focus on the pentatonic scale as such.

Dun's comparison of Scottish folk song to medieval church modes is more convincing than purported links to Chinese music, Indian music, or bird-song, however – and not only because of Daune's historical support. The connection to church modality can also be bolstered by a great many more corroborating musical details than could theories in the earlier vein of Burney and Campbell. Dun devotes more attention to melodic formulae than had any previous writer on Scottish music. He is sensitive that two church "modes" may actually share the same scale, but still be distinguished by different predominant melodic figures, for example; and he considers the idea of varying modal "dominants" or reciting tones (326, 329). Though Dun is careful to point out that for all the similarities between chant and Scottish music, there are also many differences, mostly in the rhythm (334), he draws numerous intriguing parallels – tracing features such as the typical initial, medial and final cadence points in different church modes and Scottish songs as well (326–7), and giving copious diagrams of modal chants and songs. Even the question of the gapped scale itself is approached through the idea of cadential formulae (321). On one level, then, Scottish rural music remained for Daune and Dun a "relic," a link to a "primitive" past, as in Burney's writings and the intervening treatises – even if Burney's scale is replaced with another "primitive" source, the "canto fermo." A key difference, though, from the earlier discourse lay in the fact that plainchant was not just any replacement source, but one that integrated folk modality back into a long Western literate tradition, a tradition, furthermore, that at least for some musicians of the time bore the dignity and cachet of the church.

As "folk song" became a household word, and collection a growing enterprise, various ideas and explanations from the earlier discourse would become fused. The mysticism and generalization of Burney, Campbell, and Thomson crept back in – as well as their emphasis on gapped scales – but this would now be joined with Dun's attention to

<sup>76</sup> Dun also notes that many of the "old French airs are composed after the model of the ancient modes" (*Ancient Scottish*, 336n.).

detail, his respect for his material, and his church-modal vocabulary. Hardly any really novel elements were stirred into the mixture after this point.

### **The insider as outsider**

Before considering the implications of this discourse, it is worth taking a step outside it, to consider a writer who was largely ignored. He is important precisely because he was ignored. His very lack of influence shows just how powerful the teleological ideology behind the "objective," "universal" historical approach to national music had become. Those who approached their object of study from another angle, whatever contributions and insights they potentially offered, fell into the cracks.

Dauney had called Dun's work the most "complete . . . scientific, and critical" analysis of Scottish music yet given (178). These were the ultimate words of approbation, capturing well the values of the "objective," outsider perspective that all the writing Scots we have considered chose to employ in presenting their knowledge of Scottish song. To a certain extent, these scholars necessarily stood outside some of the rural oral traditions they were documenting: they were educated and literate, and there was no established way to write about most traditions that were inherently non-literate. At least one kind of Scottish music, however, did have an established "insider" theoretical vocabulary: the Highland bagpipe tradition. Since about the sixteenth century, pipe traditions had been carefully passed down through hereditary piping families. By the early eighteenth century, there were actual piping "colleges" as well, the most famous established on the Isle of Skye by the MacCrimmon family. The pitches of the pipes and the "cuttings" and "shakes" (ornaments) were mnemonicized through a system of vocable syllables known as *Canntaireachd* (chanting). The *Canntaireachd* was almost always propagated orally, though it was occasionally written down.<sup>77</sup>

The first written account of bagpipe music theory appeared only around 1760, the same decade as the first theoretical generalizations about Scottish music as a whole. Called *A Compleat Theory of the Highland Bagpipe*,<sup>78</sup> it came from the piper Joseph MacDonald, brother of

<sup>77</sup> Brief explanations for outsiders, and historical speculations about the origins of *Canntaireachd*, began to appear only in the late nineteenth century. See J. F. Campbell, *Canntaireachd: Articulate Music* (Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair, 1880). Later, Edward Dwelly also claimed to present the "first" systematic exposition, in his *Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary*, originally 1901–11 (reprinted multiple times), 159–61; see also J. P. Grant, "Canntaireachd," *Music and Letters* 6 (1925), 54–63.

<sup>78</sup> The manuscript is in the library of Edinburgh University (MS Laing III 804). A facsimile and transcription was published privately in Texas in 1992 by A. MacRaonuill. A somewhat altered published version appeared in 1803 (see

Patrick (the minister who published Highland airs). Joseph was born on the north coast of Scotland in 1739. His work was written on a trip to India, and he died there of a fever, probably in 1763. Despite his humble rural origins, he acquired some classical training, studying violin especially, and at one point moving to Edinburgh.<sup>79</sup> According to Roderick Cannon, MacDonald was not only the first to write about pipe music, but the first to transcribe it into staff notation (Cannon, 1, 20). This implies an outsider perspective to a certain extent, and Cannon notes that MacDonald brought “his classical training to bear” (20); Cannon even considers whether such training may have altered his piping style somewhat (20, cf. also 17). Besides having some outside training, MacDonald was also typical of the writers on Scottish music examined so far in that he approached his subject as a preservation of an “Antient Style & Form” (title page). In a letter to his brother he referred to Scottish airs in the familiar terms as “simple” and “primitive” “sentiments of nature”; and like Dun he prized them for proving that “our poor remote corner, even without the advantages of learning and cultivation, abounded in works of taste and genius.”<sup>80</sup>

However, MacDonald’s book is qualitatively different from any purely outsider descriptive treatise of Scottish music. It reads as a practical manual as well as an exposé, and in this joint capacity it might serve not only to share bagpipe theory and technique with the uninitiated, but also to codify in writing the pride and knowledge of the pipers themselves. Thus, while MacDonald makes concessions to accommodate a general audience – such as staff notation – his goal is not to treat a foreign object but to bring his readers into the world of piping from the point of view of a practitioner, not an observer.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, unlike any of the other writers considered so far, MacDonald makes no general claims for his theoretical constructs. He does not portray pipe music as representative

below). The bagpipe treatise has finally been re-edited, with careful comparison between the manuscript and published versions, and with extensive and insightful notes by Roderick Cannon (*Joseph MacDonald’s Compleat Theory of the Highland Bagpipe: New Edition with Introduction and Commentary* [Glasgow]: The Piobaireachd Society, 1994). Parenthetical citations marked “Cannon” here refer to this edition and the Introduction and notes. Since the reprint gives the pagination of both the manuscript and the 1803 printed version, the citations of the manuscript are marked “MS” in parenthesis, and can also be correlated with this new edition.

<sup>79</sup> Biographical details here are drawn from Roderick Cannon’s Introduction (Cannon, 1–3); Baptie, *Musical Scotland*, 120; MacDonald, *Highland Vocal Airs*, 1–2; and Donaldson, *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 20–8.

<sup>80</sup> The letter is quoted in MacDonald, *Highland Vocal Airs*, 1–2, and Cannon, 110; see also 20. It will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

<sup>81</sup> Within the text, MacDonald only at a few points positions himself above the fray, as on page 18 of the MS, when he writes: “The first composers of Pipe Musick having never heard of any other Instrument or known any of the Rules ever invented of Musick except what were Suggested to them by Nature and Genius” so they did not think in terms of measures, and had to devise their own rules for keeping time.

either of essential Scottish qualities or – at least specifically – of a general stage of music history. Instead, he treats his subject as a self-contained practice. Consequently, his book presents a mix of perspectives, and it certainly gives a more insider view of a Scottish tradition than any other theoretical writing on Scottish music up until some very recent studies.

MacDonald devotes a good deal of his space to ornaments, form, and aspects of technique, as might be expected; but he also includes a section on "keys" (pp. 34–7 of the manuscript), which is the most relevant here. In this discussion, he mixes his classical knowledge with his practical background in a manner that could have proven very fruitful had it been followed up. While the Highland bagpipe's drone on octave A confines it to one "key" in the strictest sense, its scale (basically GABC♯DEF♯GA) admits of various combinations and melodic formulae stressing other notes. MacDonald thus writes of his piping forefathers and brethren:

One would think that the small compass of the Bag Pipe would admitt of no Key but one & that same in a very confined manner; but in this little Compass they have Contrived lively Imitations of several Keys, which tho they cannot be calld distinct ones, yet bear a great deal of the Taste which appear very different the one from the other. [Given that the bagpipe can play no minor keys] ... it is surprising what a Grave Taste they have contrivd for Laments, which is quite a distinct Taste from the rest ... (MS, 34)

MacDonald's use of the word "taste" in a manner suggesting something akin to concepts like "raga" or "maqam" is discussed briefly by Peter Cooke in an article on bagpipe music,<sup>82</sup> and the discussion is expanded in Cannon's annotations to the MacDonald treatise, though Cannon remains unsure whether MacDonald invented this concept of "Taste" or whether it was a translation of a Gaelic word in oral circulation among Highland pipers (103). Both commentators point out that MacDonald's ensuing discussion of the different "tastes" focuses on details of melodic formulae, for example noting that different ornaments can be used to give different feels to various "tastes" (MS, 34). MacDonald also considers which notes are emphasized or avoided. As he gives examples of tunes in the different "tastes," he writes out a row of a few pitches that define the taste, apparently in order of their priority to the mode. All told, he discusses two different tastes that he considers "species" of A major (one of them defined by alternation with G), four tastes that he relates to G major, and one "inclining toward D" major (MS, 34–7) – this despite the drone on A.

Whatever the potential of MacDonald's system, it was not followed up. He himself died before he could expand on it, and his manuscript

<sup>82</sup> Peter Cooke, "The Pibroch Repertory: Some Research Problems," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 102 (1975–6), 93–102, here 96–7.

languished. Lost until 1794, it was only published in 1803, when Joseph's brother took it upon himself to have it edited and produce a book (Cannon, 3). The book was given out as a prize at a piping tournament in 1804, but still seems to have been known only to a few pipers during the nineteenth century (Cannon, 4). And while it has been reprinted in several forms during the twentieth century, it remains a document used more in studying piping history than in general studies of Scottish music. In other words, precisely because MacDonald took a relatively insider viewpoint and did not draw "objective" and over-arching comparisons proving the "universality" and antiquity of the music he dealt with, his book had almost no impact on the history of the discourse discussed above. Even MacDonald's valuable specific information about the Highland pipes themselves was ignored by writers who tried to tie the bagpipes into their theories about universal modality and scales – sometimes to the point of mishearing or misrepresenting the bagpipe scale.<sup>83</sup>

### **The legacy: folk modality since 1850**

The twentieth century has seen a mushrooming of the discourse on folk modality, but the roots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries need to be recognized: each aspect of the discussion that began with Burney has been amplified individually, in tandem or in contention with other aspects. Cecil Sharp's seminal 1907 book on *English Folk-Song* is an important example. Harold Powers, in his famous article on "Mode" from the *New Grove Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, notes that Sharp's modal theories "accorded well with the Romantic idea of a living survival of some older and purer pre-Raphaelite music in what was left of the as yet uncorrupted rural countryside, and this flavour of quaintly antique modalism is still very much a part of the folk music cult."<sup>84</sup> I would like to extend Powers's observation by pointing out that not only the *spirit* of Sharp's formulation, but also all the *details*, came from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Sharp claimed that the pentatonic scale was "known to the ancient Greeks" and is "still used by the peasant-singers of Scotland and Ireland, and also by the natives of New Guinea, China, Java, Sumatra, and other Eastern nations."<sup>85</sup> He went on to give the same five root positions for the

<sup>83</sup> Saussure for instance gives the scale of the bagpipe as GABCDEFGA "toutes naturelles" (see Saussure, *Voyage*, 3: 465); perhaps this is an example of the desire of a listener to hear the "natural" leading to misinformation, since the chanter has sharpened Cs and Fs, and some tones do not conform to equal-tempered tuning.

<sup>84</sup> Powers, s.v. "Mode," *New Grove* (12: 419); this is unaltered in the rev. edn (16: 825).

<sup>85</sup> Sharp, *English Folk-Song* (1st edn), 44.

pentatonic gamut that Thomson's 1822 “Dissertation” had laid out, noting that the resulting scales are primarily associated with Scotland – though he also asserted that it was a misconception that the majority of Scottish airs are pentatonic (45). Ultimately, Sharp's system consisted of integrating the old Burney-Campbell-Thomson theory (of musical evolution out of “natural” pentatonicism) with the church-modal terminology first adopted by Daune and Dun.<sup>86</sup> Even the idea of applying this system to music outside of Scotland (in this case English) followed from the universalizing trends in Campbell and Thomson. Sharp mentions none of his theorizing predecessors at all. But with the repeated exposure they had attained, there is little doubt that he had soaked up their ideas.

In another article, Powers addresses “Modality as a European Cultural Construct,”<sup>87</sup> making several observations to “remind [us] that our 20th-century notion of something called ‘modality’ as a widely applicable cross-cultural category is an invention of European scholarship. It began with notions descended from late Renaissance theories of polyphonic modality; onto these notions have been grafted other notions that grew out of the study of liturgical and secular exotic music from the European-dominated Orient of the colonial era.”<sup>88</sup> With this I concur, but again I want to move Powers's dates backward. Powers credits Abraham Idelsohn with broadening the meaning of the word “mode” in the early twentieth century – extending it beyond the simple issue of scale-type to focus equally, or even primarily, on melodic formulae. From here, Powers argues, it spread widely into English-language scholarship with its current connotations.<sup>89</sup> But Finlay Dun in 1838 had already quite explicitly broadened the meaning of the word mode to include melodic formulae (in both chant and Scottish “folk” music).<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, this more inclusive idea of mode itself relied on European constructs of pan-nationally shared scale-types, which acquired their cross-cultural comparative implications as early as Burney.

Charles Darwin's work in the middle of the nineteenth century added a subtle new push to the broadening discussions of folk modality, since it could be twisted to add further “scientific” evidence for the idea of evolving scales. This is palpable in works such as C. Hubert

<sup>86</sup> Other aspects of Sharp's attitudes had similar precedents. Like Saussure, Fink, Daune, and Dun, Sharp also criticized composers (especially Brahms) for dressing modal tunes in modern harmony.

<sup>87</sup> In *Secondo Convegno europeo di analisi musicale: studi e testi 1*, ed. Rossana Dalmonte and Mario Baroni (Trent: Università degli studi di Trento, 1992), 207–19.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 207–8. <sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 213–14.

<sup>90</sup> See Daune, *Ancient Scottish Melodies*, esp. 325–9.



H. Parry's *The Evolution of the Art of Music* (1893).<sup>91</sup> Still, if the racist and colonial implications of the theory of "primitive" music could become more virulent after Darwin and Spencer, none of the ideas expressed by Parry's generation were really new at all.<sup>92</sup> Distilled into generally accepted lore, and then filtered back through post-Darwin evolutionary formulations, it is really Burney's drawing together of the "ancient and Oriental" roots of Scottish music that drove modal analysis of all folk music for most of the twentieth century. Contributors to the body of work on this subject included those who considered themselves musicologists, comparative musicologists, and ethnomusicologists. In 1916 Hugo Riemann laid out a clear plan of pentatonic scales (and Greek tetrachords) transforming over time into diatonic harmony,<sup>93</sup> and among the many who outlined similar trajectories before and after 1900 were Hans-Joachim Moser, Erich von Hornbostel, Maurice Emmanuel, François-Auguste Gevaert, Ernest Closson, Robert Lachmann, Bence Szabolsci, and Joseph Yasser. (Continuing in Daune's footsteps, there were always a few naysayers about universal scales – such as Alexander Ellis – but their work was often absorbed into the evolutionary model somehow.<sup>94</sup>) Indeed, theories of tonality evolving from a universal state of pentatonicism into seven-toned diatonicism grew increasingly technical over time, but they were

<sup>91</sup> On Parry's interest in Darwin and Spencer, see the Introduction by H. C. Colles to a later edition of Parry, *The Evolution of the Art of Music* (New York: D. Appleton, 1930). For a general discussion of the impact of evolutionism on the study of musical ethnology, see Bohlman, "Traditional Music," 34–5.

<sup>92</sup> Almost all of Parry's own ideas echo the earlier discourse, taking on an even more complacent assurance. In his chapter "Scales," Parry writes: "Similarity of racial type seems to have caused men to produce scales which are akin" (*Evolution*, 53). And: "nearly all the pentatonic scales have been filled in, and the natives who use them are familiar with other notes besides the curious and characteristic formula of five; but in the background of their musical feeling the original foundation of their system remains intact" (*ibid.*, 28). Elsewhere he writes such statements as "With genuine Orientals the love of unmeaning decorative ornamentation is excessive in every department of mental activity" (*ibid.*, 75). "The Chinese system is the most crudely backward and incapable of development of any of the great melodic systems . . . Nations which have not been so tied and bound by ordinances and dogmatic regulations have managed to develop pentatonic systems to a much higher degree . . . the result has naturally been in some cases to minimize the pentatonic effect" (*ibid.*, 48).

<sup>93</sup> Hugo Riemann, *Folkloristische Tonalitätsstudien* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1916), for example, 111.

<sup>94</sup> Ellis's important investigation later in the nineteenth century concluded that "the Musical Scale is not one, not 'natural,' nor even founded necessarily on the laws of the constitution of musical sound, so beautifully worked out by Helmholtz, but very diverse, very artificial and very capricious" (Alexander J. Ellis, "On the Musical Scales of Various Nations," *Journal of the Society of Arts* 33 [1885], 485–527, here 526). However, even Ellis's relatively unique idea that scales around the world might be very different could later be incorporated into the evolutionary model stressing development out of pentatonicism; see for example Riemann, *Folkloristische Tonalitätsstudien*, esp. v–vii.



rehashing familiar turf. After 300-odd pages of extraordinarily detailed and technical explanations and diagrams, Yasser in a 1932 monograph writes under the heading of "The Universal Pentatonic": "We may therefore surmise with a fair amount of safety ... that the countries omitted from this list [of those using the pentatonic scale] are but 'missing links' in what was once a general use of the pentatonic in and out of Europe."<sup>95</sup> Yasser goes on to address the evolution of that scale into the diatonic. Burney had implied as much, and Campbell had said as much in 1798.

The evolutionary model also remained the guiding paradigm within Scottish music analysis *per se*. It was reasserted by Annie Gilchrist in a 1911 article for the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*. As Sharp had done, Gilchrist combined the church-modal terminology with a discussion of the pentatonic scale arranged in different positions, considering the application of these modes to a group of songs from the Hebrides.<sup>96</sup> She does argue one new refinement: she holds that the most basic arrangement of the pentatonic scale, for the specific group of songs at hand, was that in which the "the 3rd [rather than 4th] and 7th degrees [are] omitted" (hence  $C \rightarrow D \rightarrow F \rightarrow G \rightarrow A \rightarrow C$ ). But Gilchrist too reverts to familiar generalizations: this "primitive pentatonic scale ... corresponds to the later Chinese pentatonic scale" (150–1; as corroboration for this, and for the idea of the evolution of the pentatonic into diatonic, she quotes Parry). This model, offered in Sharp and Gilchrist, was appropriated and expanded into a "mode-star" by Bertrand Bronson in the 1940s.<sup>97</sup> Bronson used this system, in which each

<sup>95</sup> Joseph Yasser, *A Theory of Evolving Tonality* (New York: American Library of Musicology, 1932), 335.

<sup>96</sup> Annie Gilchrist, "Note on the Modal System of the Gaelic Tunes," *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 4 (1911), 150–3. Powers is particularly impressed with this article. He grants that Gilchrist's ideology was not new: "Her attitude towards modalism in general was fully rooted in the late 19th-century [in fact late 18th-century!] presuppositions embodied in Sharp's Chapter on 'The Modes' in that the pentatonic scales are regarded as more 'primitive,'" and the hexatonic scales are seen as a transitional state "'on its way towards a seven-note system'" (Powers in *New Grove*, 12: 419, rev. edn 16: 825). But Powers singles out as novel in Gilchrist's article her willingness to allow that it was problematic to define modes at all based on "tonics" if "tonic" could not be equated to the final note (see Gilchrist, "Modal System," 153), and her distinction between modes on the basis of factors other than the finals. Few of Gilchrist's arguments seem new to me. The hesitancy to call the note that happened to be final the true "tonic" was expressed clearly in Thomson's "Dissertation" of 1822; and the attention to melodic formulae in Dun has been discussed in detail. Gilchrist's model of the flat seventh as the earliest added pitch is also quite familiar; she even cites Sir John Hawkins in connection with it ("Modal System," 152). Powers also praises Gilchrist's use of a cohesive collection of data to establish and test her theories (her conclusions are not *a priori*, he says); but even here, they and their support are all too familiar to convince me that they could be truly *a posteriori*.

<sup>97</sup> See Bertrand Bronson, "Folk Song and the Modes," *Musical Quarterly* 32 (1946), 37–49, also reprinted in *The Ballad as Song* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

arrangement of the pentatonic scale can be filled out into different hexatonic and diatonic scales (using church-modal terminology), to analyze the melodies in his mammoth collection of the *Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* (including English and American tunes as well as Scottish).<sup>98</sup> It is also the system largely internalized by late twentieth-century writers on Scottish music, from Francis Collinson to David Johnson to Roger Fiske.<sup>99</sup>

In his study of anthropological methodology, *Time and the Other*, Johannes Fabian notes that “When, in the course of disciplinary growth and differentiation, evolutionism was attacked and all but discarded as the reigning paradigm of anthropology, the temporal conceptions it had helped to establish remained unchanged.”<sup>100</sup> The same is true in studies of folk modality. In the 1950s the Romanian-French scholar Constantin Brăiloiu wrote an article challenging formulations (such as Riemann’s) of a direct evolutionary line from pentatonicism to “modern” major/minor diatonic harmony;<sup>101</sup> ironically, at the same time he argued more forcefully than ever for an integrated cross-cultural pentatonic “system” (going well beyond scale-type and deep into questions of melodic formulae).<sup>102</sup> And, like Riemann, his arguments – centering around questions of modulations within the pentatonic system – echoed the theoretical constructions of modulating pentatonic tunes outlined in Saussure, in Fink, and in Thomson’s 1822 “Dissertation.” (Brăiloiu in fact includes examples of two types of Scottish “double-tonic” in his evidence.<sup>103</sup>) In 1971 Norman Cazden published in the *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* an attack on Bronson’s mode-star and the general use of church-modal terminology in folk

1969), 79–91. Bronson echoes Thomson’s 1822 layout of different positions for the pentatonic scale, and his discussion of “passing tones” that eventually became structural pitches echoes not only Riemann, but, going further back, follows the model offered by Fink and Saussure.

<sup>98</sup> Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads: With their Texts, According to the Extant Records of Great Britain and America*, 4 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959–72).

<sup>99</sup> See Collinson, *Traditional and National Music*; Johnson, *Music and Society*; Fiske, *Scotland in Music*.

<sup>100</sup> Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 147.

<sup>101</sup> Constantin Brăiloiu, “Un problème de tonalité (La métaphore pentatonique)” (1955), repr. in *Problèmes d’ethnomusicologie* (Geneva: Minkoff Reprint, 1973), 409–21.

<sup>102</sup> See especially Brăiloiu, “Sur une mélodie russe” (1953), repr. in *Problèmes d’ethnomusicologie*, 343–405, in which he compares, as demonstrations of this “system,” tunes from almost every country imaginable. He even mentions Alexander Campbell (*ibid.*, 346), an isolated case of a direct reference to the earlier discourse discussed in this chapter. Brăiloiu’s pentatonic “système” includes such universal corollaries as “incertitude of the tonic,” etc. (see for example *ibid.*, 360–4). The formidable A. L. Lloyd translated this article into English; see Brăiloiu, *Problems of Ethnomusicology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 239–89.

<sup>103</sup> See “Un problème de tonalité,” 412, 416.

song study.<sup>104</sup> Going further than Brăiloiu, Cazden cast doubt on any direct evolutionary line from pentatonic to heptatonic modes via a hexatonic middleground.<sup>105</sup> He saw the pentatonic and heptatonic as *two* universal systems governed by different rules.<sup>106</sup> But still the universals remained, and if scholars have recently been more squeamish about certain modal terminology, the old model has yet to find a strong replacement. In fact, the continuing importance of the early discourse is driven home when Cazden himself states: "The pentatonic ... principle ... probably lies at the root of the ancient Greek 'enharmonic.'" <sup>107</sup> He does not cite Burney, but apparently he no longer needed to; the ideas were commonplace. As demonstrative tools, Rousseau's "Air Chinois," and Burney's use of it, have been subsumed, but not quite laid to rest.

Folk song scholarship has been influenced by the disciplinary course of ethnomusicology since the 1950s, and this suggests that a more insider approach might be of interest. But there never had been an insider approach to the question of modality in this body of "national music," outside of the bagpipe tradition – if there truly was such an approach even there – and generalizing from the bagpipe tradition outwards can be problematic. Besides, as Powers notes: "In recent decades professional folksingers and composers of folksongs have been talking glibly about their Dorian and Mixolydian tunes."<sup>108</sup> So there is no question that in fact the "outsider" approach has worked its way back into many traditions, even helping to form new ones – and, as the wording of Powers's remark indicates, perhaps even blurring some of the definitions and barriers it helped to build. In various ways the discourse on folk modality must have affected the objects of its study much earlier as well. It is not my intention here to try to overturn completely this analytic tradition. That battle, if it should have been fought, needed fighting two centuries ago. Rather, I want to point to the fact that the tradition *has* existed, and because it has existed, because its point of view and its vocabulary have been circulating since the late eighteenth century, it needs to be considered in order to properly study the way "folk" music, or even the *Volkston*, was approached by scholars, collectors, and composers on both sides of the new folk/art divide.

<sup>104</sup> Norman Cazden, "A Simplified Mode Classification for Traditional Anglo-American Song Tunes," *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 3 (1971), 45–78.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 59–60.

<sup>106</sup> Cazden's article drew from Bronson a defence claiming that Bronson's mode-star did not imply temporal evolution, but rather a constant state of flux between pentatonic and hexatonic variants. "Are the Modes Outmoded?" *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 4 (1972), 23–31.

<sup>107</sup> Cazden, "Simplified Mode Classification," 60.

<sup>108</sup> Powers, "Mode as a European Cultural Construct," 212.

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## “Folk” and “tradition”: authenticity as musical idiom from the late eighteenth century onward

The conception of national music was from its earliest days linked closely to another idea: tradition. Tradition was not a long-standing idea waiting to be pressed into service, but was rather a construct coeval with the category of national music: “tradition” too was a component of the new quest for origins. (Thus the common substitution of the term “traditional music” for “folk music” in many contexts during the last two decades of the twentieth century did not entail a major cognitive shift.<sup>1</sup>) In the course of the later eighteenth century, tradition began as a term employed – often derogatorily – to designate and investigate oral transmission itself, but it widened into a more abstract and regulative concept carrying tremendous cultural force.

Many European cultural assets were passed predominantly by oral means until the printing press; and although printing itself brought about a massive social transformation, it took two or three more centuries for “oral” and “literate” culture to be acknowledged as inherently separate entities – with marked characteristics, and profound

<sup>1</sup> Some writers have seen folk music as a narrower category than traditional music; a few have seen it as a wider category, but in most cases, the inherent reliance of folk music on some kind of “tradition” remains. (See Bohlman, *Study of Folk Music*, xv.) Tradition was an element of almost every definition of folklore in general as well – until, in 1972, Dan Ben-Amos famously formulated a definition of the discipline that downplayed tradition (see “Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context,” in *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore*, ed. Américo Parades and Richard Bauman [Austin, TX, and London: University of Texas Press, 1972], 5, 14). In recent years this has continued to be the subject of debate. (For example, Elliott Oring has stressed the idea of identity rather than tradition in defining folklore; see “The Arts, Artifacts, and Artifices of Identity,” *Journal of American Folklore* 107 [1994], 211–33.) Despite these considerations, tradition remains tightly bound to the idea of folklore, and certainly to the idea of folk music.

differences. As Nicholas Hudson points out, the identification of "oral tradition" in its current sense was part of this process; the modern conception of oral tradition was basically an eighteenth-century phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> There was of course not a complete lack of earlier European observation on the differences between speech and writing, even long before the printing press, but until the eighteenth century the word "tradition" continued to be used almost exclusively in the specific domain of the church. "Oral tradition" had been acknowledged as a Catholic religious entity – a set of rites that stood alongside the Bible, and which became one target of the Reformation. The Reformation was therefore an important watershed, not coincidentally coming around the same time as the print diaspora: it focused attention on the difference between the word of God in its "original" form as written down, and the "extraneous" information that had been appended to the Gospel largely through oral means – tradition. Since tradition at this point represented a professionally guarded lore rather than a method of passing general culture among the public,<sup>3</sup> the word carried few of its later connotations, which would accrue only as part of the same network of ideas that gave birth to anthropology and folkloristics. By the early eighteenth century, more detailed accounts of the native Americans (from writers such as Lafitau), coupled with re-evaluations of Europe's own ancient societies (such as Blackwell's writing on Homer), opened the path for increasing speculation about how such non-literate societies seemed to reach their oratory and even narrative heights.<sup>4</sup> The word "tradition" was set for a reassessment outside of religious debate.

It was with Macpherson's Ossian publications that the floodgates opened: Macpherson's presentation of the poetry, and his introductions, were manifestos on orality and the potential of non-literate

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Hudson, "'Oral Tradition': The Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Concept," in *Tradition in Transition*, ed. Ribeiro and Basker, 161–76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 161–3. Indeed, in many societies with access to writing, oral transmission has still been considered a more reliable form for maintaining guarded sacred texts (or others of high cultural import) than writing, because it required face-to-face teaching (thus preventing misinterpretation) and was also easier for learned groups to keep from the general public or other outsiders. It might also be more adaptable to present needs than knowledge "frozen" in written form. (see Jack Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968], Introduction, 12–14. See also "The Consequences of Literacy," by Goody and Ian Watt, repr. in *Literacy*, 30–68, see esp. 31–3, and 49–52 on Plato's objections to writing.) Overall, however, the massive value-transfer that Goody and Watt discuss between oral and literate society (see esp. 55–68) meant that in societies governed by a literate class, the importance of oral culture in general has been increasingly downplayed – certainly outside of such specific and bounded domains as the liturgy.

<sup>4</sup> Hudson, "Oral Tradition," 164–7.

societies. Indeed, Hudson views much of the controversy over Ossian’s authenticity as a distillation of the debate over the capabilities of oral tradition to carry a culture.<sup>5</sup> Macpherson already realized his contentiousness preemptively in the Preface to his first “epic” translation: “The strongest objection to the authenticity of the poems now given to the public under the name of Ossian, is the improbability of their being handed down by tradition through so many centuries.”<sup>6</sup> To make his claims stronger, Macpherson outlined some qualifications that would be necessary for “tradition” to preserve Ossian’s work for so long. Foremost was the condition that oral tradition could only be reliable when the group of tradition-bearers was isolated from intermixture or contamination by outsiders.<sup>7</sup> Such an assertion clearly demonstrates how tradition was implicated in the modern idea of national identity – in the invocation of shared and preserved culture as the basis of a nation.

Because of its association with a cultural nation, tradition would later pick up broader connotations: it would become a buzzword for any shared origins used to reify and codify abstracted folk “works” – and a testing ground through which to certify those works as “authentic” cultural remnants. But what culture, or whose culture, should “tradition” represent in order to build such a nation? And, as the concept of tradition morphed slowly, how could musical texts prove their authenticity to that tradition, thus establishing their importance for cultural arbiters? This chapter considers what has been at stake in folk-musical “tradition” since the late eighteenth century.

### Establishing tradition as part of oral culture

Let us first go back a bit. To some extent, there were precursors to Macpherson’s invocation of a secular culture passed on by oral tradition. Perhaps the most famous came in 1711 from Addison, who began his *Spectator* article on the Scottish–English border ballad “Chevy Chase”:

When I traveled, I took a particular Delight in hearing the Songs and Fables that are come from Father to Son, and are most in vogue among the common People of the Countries through which I passed; for it is impossible that any thing should be universally tasted and approved by a Multitude, tho’ they are only the Rabble of a Nation, which hath not in it some peculiar Aptness to please and gratify the Mind of Man. Human Nature is the same in all reasonable Creatures; and whatever falls with it, will meet with Admirers amongst Readers of all Qualities and Conditions.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 167–73. See also Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, ch. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Fingal*, x. <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii, etc. See also Hudson, “Oral Tradition,” 169.

<sup>8</sup> *Spectator* no. 70, quoted in *The Spectator*, ed. Bond, 1: 297.

Nevertheless, despite his apparent recognition of traditional transmission (he does not actually use the word "tradition"), Addison in the body of his discussion assumes without any apparent thought that the ballad is the work of a single "poet," and that he can discuss it in a single form in quite some detail without worrying about accuracy or about what the poem represents culturally. Ironically, by this very assumption that his material is consistent and unproblematic, Addison ignores the real later defining aspects of tradition and the folk domain, particularly the idea of authenticity. Authenticity is basically a term used only when origins are the crucial factor in determining the validity of a poetic or musical text; it is a criterion for testing origins.<sup>9</sup> Back in 1711, Addison did not need to explain the origins of this poetic "work" in relation to orality, nor was the potential of the transmission process to corrupt an authentic original an issue in itself: he speaks of "the common people" only in terms of reception.

Clearly, Macpherson's work raised the stakes in the discourse on orality and tradition much higher. The Preface to the first Ossian collection was ghost-written by Hugh Blair,<sup>10</sup> but it claimed outright in Macpherson's name, and using bold language, that the ancient Celtic poems had been handed down to successive bards "some in manuscript, but more by oral tradition. And tradition, in a country so free of intermixture with foreigners, and among a people so strongly attached to the memory of their ancestors, has preserved many of them in a great measure incorrupted to this day."<sup>11</sup> By claiming to have found in the Highlands great poetry that was living only in oral tradition, Macpherson forced a real confrontation with the nature and the limits of oral and written lore.<sup>12</sup> Macpherson and Blair, writing still some twenty years before Beattie's ideas became more widespread, never claimed that Ossianic poetry represented the creation of the common folk – Ossian was, after all, a courtly bard in the patronage of Highland

<sup>9</sup> Thus for example Bohlman notes that "*Authenticity* in this sense can be defined as the consistent representation of the origins of a piece (or a style or a genre) in subsequent versions or at later moments" (*Study of Folk Music*, 10).

<sup>10</sup> See Kristine Louise Haugen, "Ossian and the Invention of Textual History," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998), 309–27, esp. 312.

<sup>11</sup> Macpherson, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, vi. Note that Blair uses "tradition" in three different ways within this short Preface: first to say that "tradition" ascribes the poems to a very remote age (iii); then to say that "innumerable traditions remain" about the hero Fingal in Scotland (v); and finally in the citation above. The first use of the word is weakest, suggesting that "tradition" could contain miscellaneous information about a text, perhaps reliably. The second instance of the word implies somewhat more, while the third makes a very novel and strong claim indeed: that traditions might preserve large cultural artifacts. It is easy to find still today the words "tradition" and "folk" acting on all three levels; my central concern is with the largest claims of folk tradition.

<sup>12</sup> Macpherson needed to turn to orality in order to propose a distinguished Scottish-Celtic past in the absence of any written records (see Groom, "Celts, Goths," esp. 278–81).



chieftains. But Macpherson’s assertions were controversial enough: when he wrote his own Preface to *Fingal* in 1762, he made claims greater than Blair had for orality, suggesting not only that short fragments of ancient poetry could be preserved orally, but that the entire towering epic at hand had been both conceived and carried into the present in a non-literate society.<sup>13</sup> To assert that any non-literate society could have produced poetry of such sustained length, complexity, and empathic sentiment was incendiary; and Macpherson knew what his detractors would contend: “Ages of barbarism some will say, could not produce poems abounding with the disinterested and generous sentiments so conspicuous in the compositions of Ossian; and could these ages produce them it is impossible but that they must be lost, or altogether corrupted in a long succession of barbarous generations.”<sup>14</sup> But Macpherson insisted on the “authenticity” of the epics,<sup>15</sup> countering that non-literate societies could indeed both produce and transmit such poetry.

Orality remained a contentious concept over the next decades. Percy’s influential *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, coming only a few short years after Macpherson’s seminal work, took a step back. Percy was as interested as Macpherson in establishing a cultural history upon which to base present ideas of nationhood; this was part of his bid for a vision of British history to counter Macpherson’s “Celtic” oral past.<sup>16</sup> However, Percy’s claims for the capabilities of an oral culture were much more limited. His downplaying of orality began with the creative stage itself: besides apologizing for the general rude quality of the ancient material, Percy implies that the “larger metrical romances” came from “the *pen* of the monks or others [my italics]” – thus leaving only the “smaller narratives” as probable oral compositions of the bards and minstrels who sang them.<sup>17</sup> Not only are Percy’s claims for oral composition more modest than Macpherson’s, but, unlike Macpherson, Percy seemed wholly scornful of oral transmission in any form. When minstrels did compose orally, Percy suggests that whatever poems endured had probably been immediately transcribed.<sup>18</sup> Percy felt that even his “rude” ancient material could hardly be trusted to oral transmission: he claimed to admit almost exclusively poems from written manuscript sources to his own compilation,<sup>19</sup> though in a few cases, “the memory of a lady” (as long as she was sufficiently noble) had to do.<sup>20</sup> Percy seems to have allowed for variation between copies, but he

<sup>13</sup> See Haugen, “Ossian,” 318–19. <sup>14</sup> *Fingal*, x. <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Groom, “Celts, Goths,” esp. 285–6. <sup>17</sup> Percy, *Reliques*, 1: xvi. <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: xxii.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: ix. See my page 85 on Percy’s main manuscript source and Ritson’s counterallegations.

<sup>20</sup> See for example Percy’s discussion of how the text of “Edom O’ Gordon” was preserved (*Reliques*, 1: 99).

dates it back to minstrels altering each other's work, rather than subsequent traditional transmission;<sup>21</sup> it seems that oral transmission in any form could produce only "corruption," not variation.<sup>22</sup> Thus, though Percy's work was ostensibly part of the same emergent historicist outlook as Macpherson's, with regard to orality his claims were far less radical than those of the Scotsman – and were therefore less divisive. Percy may have aroused Joseph Ritson's ire with his beliefs about highborn English minstrels and oddly preserved manuscripts, but he stayed largely out of the larger sort of controversy that "Ossian" sparked; and he did so by downplaying new claims for orality.

In 1783, writing on English songs, Ritson himself was still belittling the poetry and music of pre-literate European culture, claiming that it was eclipsed by the much higher quality of work evidenced in the literate if common culture of the broadside trade. Partly this claim was made to rile his political enemy Percy by preferring the products of a "low" cheap-print industry to the effusions of Percy's "royal" bards. But it also shows a lingering distrust for both oral creation and transmission during the controversy around Ossian's authenticity – a distrust Ritson voiced most directly in statements raising doubts about the very existence of tradition: "The Editor has frequently heard of traditional songs, but has had very little success in his endeavours to hear the songs themselves."<sup>23</sup> (Ritson criticized the literate churchmen for not writing down vernacular songs, which would have preserved them as curiosities.<sup>24</sup>) Ritson did in some places seem to distinguish between "ballads" and "songs," with the former being "mere narrative compositions" and the latter lyric and based on a variety of topics;<sup>25</sup> and he implies that narrative *ballads* might be more easily carried on and used among the "country people."<sup>26</sup> In this distinction he was not the first; but while he and others allowed some narrative ballads to have passed through oral means, they assumed even these to be increasingly distorted as they went.<sup>27</sup> As for Scottish music, Ritson gave tradition a slightly

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: xvi.

<sup>22</sup> For example *ibid.*, 1: 161. Here Percy talks of a poem ("The Aged Lover Renounceth Love") "corrupted" from its original by the ballad-singers of Shakespeare's time (from which a part is used as the gravedigger's song in *Hamlet*).

<sup>23</sup> Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, 1: lxxiv–lxxv.

<sup>24</sup> Ritson, *Select Collection*, 1: xlv; see also lvii–lviii.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, "Preface" (separately paginated), 1: i–ii. Of Chaucer, Ritson also wrote: "His *ballades* may, indeed, have been sung, but they are certainly no songs" (*ibid.*, xlix). See p. lxxv on the common people passing their time with narrative ballads.

<sup>26</sup> See for example, *Ancient Songs*, 1: lxxv, n. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Percy's friend, the poet William Shenstone, had expressed in a letter to Percy the idea that ballads involved creative input over the years. He was among the first to put forward the idea that a "song" was lyric while a "ballad" was narrative, and he posited an interesting relation between the two: "Do you make any distinction betwixt a Ballad and a Song, and so confine yourself to the *Former*? ... With the

larger role, conceding that Highland songs preserved “traditionally” were reckoned to be good. But he maintained that few of these could be very old,<sup>28</sup> so of course he doubted the authenticity of Ossian as well.

Those who defended Ossian as genuine were more inclined to offer novel proposals for the potential of oral societies both to create and propagate music and poetry. It was in this spirit that James Beattie entertained his new ideas about the origins of the Scottish songs. Beattie’s willingness to treat Lowland shepherd or peasant composition as “national” culture alongside the compositions of Highland bards owed as much to the widening implications of Macpherson’s claims about orality as it did to notions of natural creative genius. (Of course, natural genius and the power of orality were themselves intimately linked: both were invoked by Macpherson and his apologists to explain the apparently incredible quality of poetry produced by a “wild” and “rude” ancient society.)

### Theories of origin and theories of transmission in dissonance

Even in early endorsements of oral culture, however, “tradition” – still largely synonymous with oral transmission – remained the shakiest proposition. Macpherson had difficulty convincing the skeptics (such as Samuel Johnson) of non-literate *creation*; but he seems to have had difficulty convincing even himself of non-literate *transmission*. When he had initially presented “fragments” of ancient poetry, it was only mildly contentious to assert that a great many were “incorrupted to this day.” (Others too could relatively easily claim that small cultural artifacts might be passed in this way.<sup>29</sup>) It was harder to make such claims

common people, I believe, a Song becomes a ballad as it grows in years; as they think an old serpent becomes a Dragon, or an old justice a Justice of Quorum” (quoted in Sighurd Bernhard Hustvedt, *Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain During the Eighteenth Century* [New York: The American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1916], 160). Obviously, Shenstone’s suggestion of communal input is not invested with the positive connotations of Beattie’s creative theory or of later works that privileged oral tradition as a fundamental part of “national” music. Nor does Percy himself seem to have taken any notice of Shenstone’s idea in any case (see *ibid.*, 161). David Herd had also classified the contents of his collection into narrative and historical “ballads” and various categories of “songs,” but without proposing differences in their transmission (see *The Ancient and Modern Scots Songs, Heroic Ballads, &c* [Edinburgh: Martin and Wotherspoon, 1769], vii, and the subject headings in Part II, esp. on p.217).

<sup>28</sup> Ritson, *Select Collection*, 1: xxxvi.

<sup>29</sup> For an early non-musical example discussing “tradition” in general folklore (customs, rituals, proverbs, etc.) among “the common people,” see John Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (Newcastle upon Tyne: T. Saint for J. Johnson, 1777). This was in fact a reprint of Henry Bourne’s *Antiquitates Vulgares: Or, the Antiquities of the Common People* (Newcastle: J. White, 1725). There were uses of the word “tradition” in this sense much older as well, but Brand’s 1777 edition contains added material that pays

for the full-length epic Macpherson produced next, *Fingal*. In his Introduction to this work, Macpherson supported his ideas about the oral transmission of extended poetry primarily by claiming that the bards deliberately introduced mnemonic qualities to facilitate faithful transmission in sung performance.<sup>30</sup> But by the Introduction to *Temora* a year later, he qualified further the circumstances under which oral epics could pass through the generations.<sup>31</sup> Among other things, Macpherson admitted openly that he had assembled various fragments into a whole – implying that oral tradition, whatever its powers, was incapable of sustaining a complete epic.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps he had so thoroughly convinced himself of the inevitable disintegration of his materials over time that he really did not see his own work as forgery, but rather as the scholarly reassembly of what he honestly believed was the original whole; or at least he may have honestly believed that he had created something that could have been that whole.<sup>33</sup> In any case, both Macpherson's brash claims for oral creation and his apparent doubts about oral transmission would echo for at least the next two centuries.

Percy had granted no importance to tradition because he had also granted no importance to orality in the creation of national material in the first place. Macpherson's squeamishness about tradition was logical in a different way, since Macpherson (and other contemporaries and followers who invoked a bardic origin for national music) believed they were dealing not with a "folk" creation, but with what Hans Naumann would later term the *gesunkenes Kulturgut*<sup>34</sup> – the sunken remains of a high or courtly culture. In this understanding of tradition, the old songs dispersed into common currency only after the decline in status and eventual disappearance of the bards or their equivalent. While the bards presumably had careful mechanisms for preserving their material orally, among the low populace the means were lost for accurate transmission; and oral tradition could only be deleterious. Thus Walter Scott, who offered similar claims to Macpherson's about bardic oral

more attention to "tradition" as a part of a potentially large-scale oral culture – and thus derives new meanings from the customs described.

<sup>30</sup> *Fingal*, xii. Here Macpherson supplements his argument by claiming that ancient Greek laws were similarly retained; and the Incas and other societies had similar oral traditions.

<sup>31</sup> See Hudson, "Oral Tradition," 168–9. <sup>32</sup> *Temora*, xviii.

<sup>33</sup> Macpherson never claimed he had had no personal input; in addressing the issue of reassembling the work from fragments, he goes so far as to say that the work has "in some measure . . . become my own" (*Temora*, xviii). On Macpherson's ideas of authenticity, etc., see Stafford, *Sublime Savage*, 82–5, 124–6, etc.

<sup>34</sup> See Hans Naumann, *Grundzüge der deutschen Volkskunde* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1922), 119–32.

culture and its mnemonic ability to perpetuate itself,<sup>35</sup> could condemn the longer-term process of oral tradition as inherently doomed to decay and “corruptions,” especially when material passed out of the hands of professionals and into the hands of “ignorant” reciters.<sup>36</sup> As William Donaldson has recently put it, for Scott it was “as if these pieces had been confectioned in some remote kitchen by a master chef, long dead, then ferried down the corridors of time by a succession of idiot waiters who spilled things and got the plates mixed up.”<sup>37</sup> Scott termed tradition a “degraded species of alchemy, by which the ore of antiquity is deteriorated and adulterated.”<sup>38</sup> Collectors and editors operating on this premise sought to “rescue” the earlier court culture before it was totally gone, or to reconstruct it based on their own beliefs.

However much sense this may have made for those who believed national song was a bardic creation, the dissonance between trust in oral creation and distrust in oral tradition seems much stranger among those who endorsed Beattie’s theory of peasant creation. If Scott still distinguished between oral transmission among ancient professionals patronized by nobility and oral transmission among the unlettered “vulgar” mass, Ritson did not. Yet even in his work after the Revolution, where, following Beattie, he insisted that the creators of national song were the rural unlettered, he did not consider them worthy guardians of their creations: in words uncannily similar to Scott’s, despite their political differences, Ritson spoke of tradition as “in short ... a species of alchemy which converts gold to lead.”<sup>39</sup> Most scholars at this point had come to see national song as an embodiment of a common *oral* culture, but also as inherently threatened by that oral culture. Such an approach overrode many differences evident already among the earliest folk music collectors – in politics (from left to right),

<sup>35</sup> “When the pen and the press are wanting, the flow of numbers impresses upon the memory of posterity, the deeds and sentiments of their forefathers. Verse is naturally connected with music; and among a rude people, the union is seldom broken. By this natural alliance, the lays ... are more easily retained by the reciter ...” See Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads, collected in the Southern Counties of Scotland; with a Few of Modern Date, Founded upon Local Tradition*, 3 vols. (Kelso and Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1802–3), 1: xc–xcii. Scott implied that most of his collection was the work of trained bards, though by the time he was writing he had to leave open the possibility of low composition as well (*ibid.*, 1: xcii–xcvi, c).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: c–cii. Scott’s friend Robert Jamieson offered a similar picture of an oral national culture that needed to be rescued from the vulgar illiterate who had become its guardians. See Harker, *Fakesong*, 49.

<sup>37</sup> Donaldson, *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 142.

<sup>38</sup> This is from an introductory essay that Scott wrote near the end of his life for his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, printed in the complete edition *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1833), 1: 22; also quoted in Donaldson, *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 142.

<sup>39</sup> *Scottish Songs*, 1: lxxxi. See also Harker, *Fakesong*, 24–6, 30–1.

and in editorial approach (from the bowdlerizers to the sticklers for accuracy). Despite their divergences, these editors were unified by an implicit belief that by capturing oral effusions in writing they were saving them from a process that inherently destroyed the texts it conveyed, or at the very least, diminished their value as archaeological relics of the past. The collectors felt they were making stable what was dangerously ephemeral – in one recurrent and evocative phrase of the time, what was merely “floating in the breath.”<sup>40</sup>

If the distrust of orality appears strangest among the scholars who held the common people themselves to be the creators of national song, we must remember that even here the “folk” represented the past. Susan Stewart notes, in a study of the analogous situation in the literary world, that authenticity becomes an issue “in situations where there is a self-conscious perception of mediation; a sense of distance between one era and another, one worldview and another; a sense of historical periodization, transformation, and even rupture.”<sup>41</sup> In the post-Ossianic discourse on national music, just such a rupture was perceived between nature and modern civilization, and a constant vigilance was required to restore the ravages of time, to reconstruct an extrapolated archaic, authentic original work – because this original was a relic of both lost human purity and an object of nationalist import.

### **From fixed texts to variant “sets”: the conception of modern folk “works”**

By the turn of the century, however, some music collectors were taking a different tack: allowing the “folk” to have had a positive creative input even after the first moment of creation of a song. These collectors were the first to establish what would become the commonplace understanding among folklorists and ethnomusicologists: that oral “tradition” was not (or certainly not *only*) corrupting a single, original text but in fact *forming* cultural artifacts over time. Once “tradition” was redefined as a long-term organic process with positive associations, its connotations could also widen beyond the mechanism of oral transmission: tradition could rise above being a mere tool for use in discovering the past, itself coming to reify a shared cultural history, as a living bridge from the past to the present. Tradition could truly become one with “national” or

<sup>40</sup> For examples of this turn of phrase, see Samuel Johnson’s diary writing from Skye (in Rogers, ed., *Johnson and Boswell in Scotland*, 211); and R.H. Cromek, *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song: With Historical and Traditional Notices Relative to the Manners and Customs of the Peasantry* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1810), ii. See also Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, 88–91.

<sup>41</sup> Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, 105. See also Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), esp. 3–23.



“folk” culture. With this shift, tradition’s viability – in Macpherson’s initial presentation confined to a bardic class and a Highland fringe culture that had never intermixed with foreign influence – was extended to any rural peasantry that could be seen as carrying a similar unmiscegenated stability.

As we have seen, tradition had been linked right from the start to the construction of individual national “works”: the accuracy of “traditional” transmission had to be proven in order to validate such works as properly preserved and representative of their national origin. The idea of an underlying “work” did not disappear as tradition came to be viewed as a formative process. On the contrary, a new folk “work-concept” was emerging – equally important but quite different from the idea of the art “work” that was becoming so influential among writers and composers (and which will be considered in Chapter 6). Folk texts were now seen as clusters of related variants forged over time. Such variants were valid in and of themselves as “authentic” national representations, since each was itself a creation of tradition – but they were also recognized as abstracted manifestations of the same work, a work that, by receding to the idealized plane, could become increasingly cohesive and representational. This conception of a folk work, more than any other single element, consolidated the methodology of folkloristics in its lasting form.

It had been no accident that Beattie hit upon his theory of national music’s origins among the people in a musical rather than literary realm. He was inspired by emerging ideas about the universality of musical sense and aptitude resulting from the post-Rousseau notion of music – as prior to language and closer to primal nature. Notably, the same ideas about music’s universality also meant that the earliest acceptance of folk creation as a continuous process came in musical rather than poetic studies. A generation before literary collectors would accept and elaborate on the idea, music collectors had already begun to accept the existence of valid variants – or “sets” as they were called – as results of this process. In the Preface to Patrick MacDonald’s 1784 *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs*,<sup>42</sup> MacDonald explained that he did not seek to present a single authentic version of a musical work, or even a variant that most approached a conjectural past original. Yet he clearly *had* thought about the “identity” of each work in tradition. His formulation of such works set the basic precedent for the language that folk collectors would continue to use through the twentieth century. Perhaps, says MacDonald, he has:

not always given the best sets of them [the airs in the collection], as he may not have had the good fortune to hear those sets. A perfect uniformity in the manner

<sup>42</sup> Parenthetical citations in the next three paragraphs refer to this text.



of performing vocal airs is not to be expected: more especially if they have never been written out in musical characters. The execution of an air will be different, according to the musical powers and attainments, or the taste and sensibility of the performer. Musicians well know, that a few variations in the melody of particular passages, do by no means destroy the identity of a piece of music. Hence better or worse editions or sets of the same air will be obtained from different persons, or in different parts of the country. (4)

Here is a strong assertion of both the reified identity of the folk work and its essentially varying nature.

A few years later, the great Robert Burns, who knew MacDonald's collection well,<sup>43</sup> extended this approach from the Highlands to all of Scotland.<sup>44</sup> Burns liked to compare variants, and he often found his favorite versions in living tradition rather than in previously notated versions. Of the song "An O for ane & twenty Tam," Burns wrote to his collaborator Thomson: "The set . . . [already published] in the [*Scots Musical*] Museum, does not please me; but if you will get any of our ancients Scots Fiddlers to play you, in Strathspey time, 'The Moudiewort,' (that is the name of the air) I think it will delight you."<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Burns not only compared variants of the same tune, but considered the ancestry of tunes – the process of transformation and the links of one tune to another. In his annotation on "Lewis Gordon," he wrote: "This air is proof how one of our Scots tunes comes to be composed out of another. I have one of the earliest copies of the song, and it has prefixed *Tune of Tarry Woo*. Of which tune, a different set has insensibly varied into a different air."<sup>46</sup> There are several other similar examples in Burns's notes and letters.<sup>47</sup> Thus Burns went well beyond MacDonald, by broaching the concept of the evolving and transforming meta-work (what Samuel Bayard would formally term a "tune-family" in the twentieth century<sup>48</sup>). Of course there were some

<sup>43</sup> See for example *Letters of Robert Burns*, Letter 485A, 2: 125.

<sup>44</sup> Though Lowland Scots was his own native speech, and most of his melodies came from the Lowlands, he also made a point of setting some of his song-poetry to Highland airs.

<sup>45</sup> *Letters of Robert Burns*, Letter 644, 2: 317. See also Letter 557, 2: 206, and Letter 503, 2: 141, on the song "Craigburniewood," for which Burns found his favorite variant "from a country girl's singing."

<sup>46</sup> James C. Dick, ed., *Notes on Scottish Song by Robert Burns: Written in an Interleaved Copy of the Scots Musical Museum with Additions by Robert Riddell and Others* (London: Henry Frowde, 1908), 21.

<sup>47</sup> For example on Auld Lang Syne's melody: "the music is an old air, the rudiments of the modern tune of that name" (*Letters of Robert Burns*, Letter 647, 2: 329); or on "When she cam ben, she bobbit": "By the by – take a close look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which Roslin Castle is composed. – The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air" (Letter 644, 2: 316).

<sup>48</sup> See Samuel Bayard, "Prolegomena to a Study of Principal Melodic Families of British-American Folksong," *Journal of American Folklore* 63 (1950), 1–44. Bayard believed

collectors even in the musical realm with more rigid ideas about the folk work;<sup>49</sup> but editors such as MacDonald and Burns were forging a path that would soon be followed by the vast majority of collectors. They turned the national work of Percy’s generation – with its single, imagined original form – into the modern folk work: a family of variants created organically, and linked to *other* folk works in the same organic fashion.

When literary folklorists did eventually embrace the variant concept, they offered more explicit justifications than the musicians had – perhaps because variants seemed more inherently foreign to literary precepts. Writing in 1810, Robert Cromeek unequivocally extended to all of Scotland’s peasants the same values that at first had been imputed only to the isolated ancient Highlanders and their bards. While, according to Cromeek, England was early depleted of isolated peasants and thus of heartfelt popular ballads, Scotland – even the Lowlands – was different. There, the “inland peasantry, removed from the bustle and contamination of foreign commerce, still preserved the perfect individuality of character . . . Taught by their fathers to regard every foreign fashion as a dangerous innovation, they preserved themselves unpolluted with the stream of refinement which was sapping the ancient manners and character of their nobility and chieftains.”<sup>50</sup> Even the language itself of Cromeek’s inland peasantry had “none of that vulgar broadness so disgusting in those sea-coast towns which commerce has corrupted” (xvi). Having laid out these justifications, Cromeek felt able to trust his idealized peasants: he not only believed them to be the creators of Scottish song, he also allowed for them to have had continued input in the “selection and preservation” of the body of material (v–vii, xv), and even to have played an enduring creative role in tradition. “Old songs were altered to suit some more recent occurrence; their language was frequently minted anew, and the song would take a novel appearance from a small incident of love, or a gallant exploit” (xv). Cromeek placed such faith in this “peasantry” to represent

Anglo-American and much other folk music derived from an extremely limited number of “tune-families.”

<sup>49</sup> The most extreme example I have come across is Captain Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, a friend of Burns, who seemed to apply the new “art music” conception of *Werktreue* to traditionally transmitted tunes as well. In the early 1790s, Riddell annotated one Scottish song thus: “Here is another Fingallian air – said to be – but the moment a tune suffers the smallest alteration, it loses its prominent features, its costume, its every thing. Music like a fine painting, can admit of no alteration no retouching by any other hand, after it has come from that of the original composer. R. R.” (Dick, *Notes on Scottish Song*, 64). Many cases are more ambiguous.

<sup>50</sup> Cromeek, *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, iii, viii–ix. Parenthetical citations in this paragraph refer to this source.

the "national" culture that, in opposition to earlier literary collectors, he believed it was the written versions that were corrupt, for he held that the real degrading forces that had obscured that national culture were the ravages of Reformation censure of songs, and the "refining" urges of early song editors such as Allan Ramsay (iv–v).

The poet and collector William Motherwell took Cromeck's faith in oral creation over time even further, using the term "traditionary" song interchangeably with "ancient song" or "popular poetry" to designate the body of material later known as folk song. Though Motherwell had lurched politically to the right during his first-hand experiences dealing with mobs as a law officer,<sup>51</sup> he drew a line between the real masses he dealt with politically and his idealized rural Scottish peasantry.<sup>52</sup> After the age of chivalry had gone, and with it the esteemed minstrel profession, "the lower ranks of the people became, as is always the case, the rightful and undisputed heirs of the cast-off tastes and literature of the higher orders" (xxix).<sup>53</sup> He thus saw tradition, if "a substitute for more efficient and less mutable channels" of communication" (ii), still "in all matters relative to popular poetry" "a safe and almost unerring guide" (iii). It was not only a relic of the past, but a source of continuity with that past – a window into "the feelings and passions of the people," even "an actual embodiment of their Universal mind" (v, note the capital letter). More even than Cromeck, Motherwell believed that it was not "among the unlettered and rude" that oral song has suffered most, but among would-be improving editors (iii–iv; Cromeck himself comes in for severe criticism, lxxxvii–lxxxviii); so he believed that it was essential to take down each effusion exactly as it came from an oral source. He disdained not only "polishing" and similar processes, but censured even those who would collate different oral versions into a single one, thus obscuring the "individuality" and "authenticity" of individual performances (vi). Indeed, Motherwell's careful justification for accepting individual specimens and performances as valid authentic exemplars of the same folk creative work fulfills and goes beyond Herder's formulation of the "living folksong."

<sup>51</sup> See Harker, *Fakesong*, 39, 45–6; and *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>52</sup> The latter he saw as "the patriotick children of an ancient and heroick race," William Motherwell, *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern* (Glasgow: John Wylie, 1827), ix. Parenthetical citations in the next three paragraphs refer to this book.

<sup>53</sup> Note that while Motherwell considered the bardic theory that ancient chivalric romances degenerated into popular fragments, he also speculated that the process may have gone partially the other way: "It becomes, however, a question, whether these ballads, thus referable to Ancient Romance, were themselves not the first elements of the very compositions from which they are now hypothetically derived" (*Minstrelsy*, xxxiii).

### Tradition as social reaction: musical implications of the “folk” ideology

Remarkably, despite Motherwell’s insistence on the stability of peasant tradition, he *still* saw his task as salvage: “the only step were are warranted in taking . . . is that of preventing . . . [the] future dilapidation [of ‘ancient national minstrelsy’], by now carefully and accurately gathering what of its wreck we can yet find floating around us. The time may come when even these fragments will also be irretrievably borne beyond our reach” (iv–v). Indeed, in many ways, rather than resolving the dissonance between the supposed achievements of past oral activity and the shortfalls of current oral transmission, the new editors and collectors amplified the inconsistency – making ever greater claims for orality and “tradition” while continuing to undercut that tradition’s ability to persist. Although there was ostensibly a new trust placed in oral tradition, even this did not signal a complete ideological shift.

The extensive social history outlined by the literary collectors to justify their trust in tradition helps explain the paradox: the change was really from seeing decay as inherent in the traditional process itself to seeing tradition as potentially stable, but decay as inherent in the social process that eventually would eliminate the tradition-bearers. Contemporary peasants were allowed to be a remnant of the “naïve” existing within a “sentimental” world, but soon they too would be conquered by the forces of time. Motherwell details this: “The changes which, within this [last] half century, the manners and habits of our peasantry and labouring classes, with whom this song has been cherished, have undergone, are inimical to its further preservation.” Now they laugh at the “superstitions” of older times, and “in parting with the antiquated notions of other days, they part also with their wisdom and their virtues” (cii). Cromeck had similarly conceived of a recent break in tradition; the English may have already lost their “attachment to the soil,” but even his cherished Scottish peasantry, guardians of traditional culture, were doomed to go the same route – nay, were already well on their way.<sup>54</sup> With them would disappear the traditional songs and culture they had preserved so long, the fabric of the nation. Tradition, it

<sup>54</sup> “The Scottish peasantry have within these dozen years completely overturned their ancient customs . . . They are certainly much better educated than ever . . . but they begin to lose their vigorous originality of character, by attempting to copy the more polished and artificial manners of their neighbors. So great and rapid, indeed, has been the change, that in a few years the Songs and Ballads here selected would have been irrecoverably forgotten” (Cromeck, *Remains*, xviii–xxi).

seems, was an inherently reactionary concept; and thus, as Harker points out, folk song itself was an inherently reactionary concept.<sup>55</sup>

Because of this reactionary undercurrent, the literary scholars or dilettantes who formulated “folk music” (as with folk poetry) divorced its value from aesthetic issues, instead vesting its worth entirely in tradition itself – in the music’s ability to uphold and represent a past shared culture. The attitudes expressed by these early collectors and editors of folk music affected their treatment of the tunes, and extended to daily practice. William Donaldson has isolated what he calls “the Macpherson paradigm”: the set of ideas that crystallized around the Ossian publications, stressing the antiquity, mystery, noble barbarism, melancholy wildness, and irregularity of all Highland art forms. This paradigm brought with it the assumption – first propagated by Macpherson himself – that traditional material was essentially unchanging; and therefore any changes signaled a breakdown and a need for modern scholars to rescue and mediate Highland art from outside.<sup>56</sup> Donaldson focuses on how this conception of Highland arts in general dominated the discourse on Scottish Highland pibroch music for the next two centuries after Macpherson. The gentlemen-amateurs who had concocted the “Macpherson paradigm,” imposed their own visions of ancient society on the music they wrote about, profoundly affecting practice. The “Highland Societies” of Scotland and London, composed largely of well-to-do sentimental nationalists who knew nothing about bagpipe performance practice and did not even like the instrument, affected the performance of the pibrochs not only through their writings, but through institutions such as piping competitions and pageants – judged by these same outsiders. They sought to “rescue piping from the pipers.”<sup>57</sup> Donaldson shows forcefully how the “Macpherson paradigm” has been inherently destructive to real musical practices (having stagnated and all but killed pibroch playing<sup>58</sup>); he thus asserts instead that tradition ought to be variant – changing from within rather than imposed from above.

Donaldson’s proposal for a “tradition” that is based primarily on change and creativity is laudable, but perhaps the reason it had not

<sup>55</sup> Harker details how every collector of Motherwell’s generation was caught in the same bind – relying on tradition and yet seeing it as inevitably working its way into oblivion. See Harker, *Fakesong*, ch. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Donaldson, *Highland Pipe*, esp. 19. See also a slightly earlier article by Donaldson, “Change and Invariance in the Traditional Performing Arts,” *Northern Scotland* 17 (1997), 33–54.

<sup>57</sup> “Change and Invariance,” 47.

<sup>58</sup> Donaldson’s conclusion is that “The bacillus of invariance theory, spreading from the cultural mediators to the performer community itself, was ultimately deadly” (*ibid.*, 50); also *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 461–6.

been previously put forth is because “tradition” is too intransigent a word for this end (“performance practice” might be better). In other words, the issue lies in the concept of tradition itself: the application of the word “tradition” steered focus inherently onto fixity – and expanded beyond performers to what they represented as cultural capital, which inherently brought in outside arbitration. Though the acceptance of variants and evolving tune or ballad families suggests that some change was tolerated within tradition, the most striking and consistent feature of definitions of traditional transmission and folk music in general is the implication that the fixity operates on a higher level than the change: variance is bounded by tradition. This assumption remained inherent in the work of Cecil Sharp, Bertrand Bronson, the IFMC, and onward.<sup>59</sup> (A recent *Dictionary of World Folklore* defines folklore as a dynamic tension between “innovation and tradition” – note that tradition is specifically placed here as the *opposite* of innovation.<sup>60</sup>) To be wielding (or imposing) tradition, from the time tradition was fulfilled as a cultural idea, meant to be connecting with the past in a supposedly stable way – if growth was allowed within this framework, it needed to spring “organically” from a natural and internal source. Tradition, in musical terms or otherwise, has always required patrolling and defending against elements from outside its idealized domain. As Eric Hobsbawm put it: “The object and characteristic of ‘traditions,’ including invented ones, is invariance. The past, real or invented, to which they refer imposes fixed (normally formalized) practices.”<sup>61</sup> Thus simply: the “Macpherson paradigm” as Donaldson describes it is the concept of tradition – and became the folk paradigm.

<sup>59</sup> Thus Bohlman also notes that “practice belies rapprochement [between the idea that ‘folk music’ represents something ancient, and its continued existence in the modern world] when one insists that change must embody the past to be traditional” (*Study of Folk Music*, 13).

<sup>60</sup> “Folklore is essentially an oral form; its two key features are variation and repetition. This apparent paradox is what gives folklore its dynamic tension; it is simultaneously artistic and functional; a fluid creative process and a conservative repository; innovation and tradition” (Alison Jones, *Larousse Dictionary of World Folklore* [Edinburgh and New York: Larousse, 1995], vii). The definition of folk *music* in the same dictionary makes it clearer that the supposed “change” within this music is bounded by the larger criterion of preservation and fixity: folk music “can only truly be said to exist alongside an alternative urban, elite or popular tradition. These other forms tend to be disseminated by the media, to be subject to fluctuations of fashion and outside influence, and to reflect the relative economic diversity of the population. Folk music, on the other hand, is the property of a smaller, more homogeneous cultural group and deals with themes pertaining to the entire group; it is transferred orally rather than in writing or recording and is thus subject to change and development with each performance” (*Larousse Dictionary of World Folklore*, 187). This “change” and development clearly does not include “outside influence” – which might compromise “tradition.”

<sup>61</sup> Hobsbawm, ed., *Invention of Tradition*, 2.

Furthermore, the distinction between musical tradition as imposed by bourgeois folk scholars or mediators and insider ideas about tradition broke down quickly – as many performers came to internalize the same values as the outside mediators. Consider Patrick MacDonald’s 1784 *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs*. The materials in MacDonald’s collection were gathered primarily by his brother Joseph (who wrote the bagpipe treatise discussed in the [previous chapter](#)). However much the MacDonald brothers saw “living” elements in Highland music,<sup>62</sup> even Joseph – very much an “insider” to the performance community – made clear that this music often “lived” in circumstances that were dying. Patrick’s 1784 Preface includes excerpts from a letter Joseph sent home to his father from India probably around 1761–2, and even at this time just after the first Ossian publications, Joseph saw his beloved Highland airs in the same light as the gentlemen-dilettante historians later would. Joseph too considered them the “*remains* [my italics] of our ancient Highland music”; and his very purpose in assembling the airs that laid the basis for Patrick’s later publication was “that those sweet, noble, and expressive sentiments of nature may not be allowed to sink and die away.”<sup>63</sup> The sentimental nationalist rhetoric of tradition may have begun in literary circles, but it penetrated at least into the most literate layer of insiders and even performers immediately – and it became more deeply internalized by the last decade of the eighteenth century, as musicians became more aware of themselves as “national” (i.e. what would become “folk”) performers – as bearers of tradition.<sup>64</sup>

There is ultimately no great difference between viewing tradition as inherently a decaying force and viewing it as inherently threatened by the decay of “traditional” ways of life. In both cases, “rescue” and mediation are called for. This is the same problem that *all* music branded “traditional” or “folk” has faced ever since. An exception

<sup>62</sup> See Donaldson, *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 49.

<sup>63</sup> MacDonald, *Highland Vocal Airs*, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Donaldson believes that the “Macpherson” paradigm penetrated only the most literate classes and thus remained separate from the performer community until the middle of the 1830s (*Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 161, 178, etc.). Yet although many Highlanders remained illiterate, they were not insensible to the discourse around their music, which could be communicated by means other than direct reading. As just one example, pipers who participated in contests would become aware of the criteria on which they were being judged, and of the discussion around the judging, even if they did not read. Even before these piping competitions became common in the 1780s, widespread written matter (or ideas from this discourse) must have been the source of discussion in other contexts too. (Later, Patrick MacDonald’s Highland tune collection sold very well, running through many editions at moderate price, and seems to have penetrated well down the class spectrum [see *Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, 45–6].)



helps prove the rule: Donaldson discusses the light music of the pipe (the ceól beag), which unlike the pibroch, was allowed to flourish creatively while the latter was being stifled by outside institutional control.<sup>65</sup> This is not a case, however, in which “tradition” was allowed to develop unencumbered by ideology; rather, the freedom in light piping music resulted from the fact that it hardly fell under the attention of any scholar who saw it as “traditional.” During the period when it flourished with novelties, no one inside or outside the performer community was burdening it with the word “tradition.” Nowadays, if pipers call this light music traditional, even this adjectival form of the idea is limiting the amount of change permitted within that practice, or limiting at least the idiomatic domain of the changes that *are* permitted. Indeed, another recent book on the bagpipe has lamented the “dying” of this same light-music “tradition” – now that it is codified as such.<sup>66</sup>

From the end of the eighteenth century onward, the idea of tradition “living,” but in “dying” societies, spread well outside of Scottish writings, and it too became a fundamental basis of folkloristics: it is what Alan Dundes objected to as “The Devolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory.”<sup>67</sup> The idea that authenticity to traditional origin trumped authenticity to otherwise-formulated aesthetic considerations has also persisted: even scholars initially drawn to the field by their love of “the music” have since the late eighteenth century constructed that music’s value in terms of what it represents socially – tradition.<sup>68</sup> And no matter how much variance folklorists ostensibly allowed, tradition, by definition, seems always to be under threat of change – to need protection, to be breaking down, since the concept is really about setting the acceptable limits of change, about the force

<sup>65</sup> see *ibid.*, 354–74 and 460.

<sup>66</sup> John G. Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745–1945* (Edinburgh: NMS Publishing, 1998).

<sup>67</sup> “The association of folklore with the past, glorious or not, continued. Progress meant leaving the past behind. From this perspective, the noble savage and the equally noble peasant – folkloristically speaking – were destined to lose their folklore as they marched ineluctably towards civilization. Thus it was not a matter of evolution of folklore; it was more a matter of the evolution *out* of folklore” (Alan Dundes, “The Devolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory,” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 6 [1969], 12).

<sup>68</sup> For example, Bertrand Bronson states that it was “a simple liking for folk-song in general” that started him on his life-long study (*The Ballad as Song*, vii); but then he still needs to prescribe what should happen to “folk music” based on “traditional” values rather than other aesthetics. Speaking of the present state of folk song, he writes: “Accept we must, like it or not. But if concerned with traditional values, we should try to be clear as to where those values lie . . . Fractures of tradition are by definition anti-traditional; and if they are established as a norm in themselves, what is there left to distinguish folk-song from any other kind of individual artistic effort . . . ?” (*ibid.*, 271–2).

working against change, about establishing a form of “authenticity.” Even Milman Parry and Albert Lord, the famous mid-twentieth-century advocates of variant flexibility in the folk traditions they studied in Yugoslavia, still felt that the spread of written versions of the songs among the performer community there meant “death to oral tradition” – an unacceptable change of style. Indeed: they believed that “The oral process is now nearly dead.”<sup>69</sup>

### **Authenticity as idiom**

It is a cliché in our post-structuralist days to note that authenticity is a chimera – that what we consider authentic always shows us more about ourselves and our values than about the object under consideration; but it is worth noting, from the point of view of disciplinary history, how quickly and by what means the concept of authenticity worked alongside the reactionary aspects of tradition to affect the material it was supposedly preserving and salvaging. Namely, as soon as the idea of musical tradition came to allow for variants in a folk “work,” the test of authenticity among those variants devolved onto musical style – onto *idiom*.

In Scotland, fieldwork to collect music from tradition-bearers began immediately after the concept of tradition was formulated, taking off by the end of the eighteenth century. Of the early collectors, Alexander Campbell, whose “primary scale of music” we considered in the [previous chapter](#), stands out because he left fairly intricate manuscript journals of his fieldwork, two of which survive.<sup>70</sup> In these he showed himself to be quite open-minded in many respects. He collected from a wide range of tradition-bearers and developed a rapport with his informants from across the class spectrum<sup>71</sup> – and, unlike many other collectors until quite recently, he often had the courtesy to name even his lower-class informants, thus granting them individuality even though they were representatives of the “universal” folk collective.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 137, 138. Interestingly, for Lord, it is not the spread of writing *per se* but the internalized idea of the fixed archetypal text (taken from written culture) that is killing oral tradition. Here, ironically, it is the idea of fixity that destroys the “fixity” of a traditional process!

<sup>70</sup> “A Slight Sketch of a Journey Made Through Parts of the Highlands & Hebrides; Undertaken to Collect Materials for *Albyn’s Anthology*, by the Editor: in Autumn, 1815” (Edinburgh University Library, MS La.III.577); also “Notes of My third Journey to the Border” (Edinburgh University Library, MS La.II.378, #2).

<sup>71</sup> See for example Campbell’s discussion of the “Grass-Keeper in Carnish,” Roderick Macquier, and his extensive repertoire of Ossianic songs (“A Slight Sketch,” f. 17v).

<sup>72</sup> See for example *Albyn’s Anthology*, 1: 29 (“This beautiful specimen . . . was taken down by the Editor from the mouth of MARGARET MACDONALD, one of the domestics of DONALD MACDONALD, Esq. of Bal-Ronald, North Uist, in September 1815”).

He was aware of his own effect on his informants – that he himself is often the “curiosity”<sup>73</sup> – and he even considered the temptation they might have felt to trick him, so he sought to verify all of what he collected as much as possible.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, for all Campbell’s keen awareness and attention to detail, his sense of himself as both insider and outsider was governed by the activity at hand: he could be an insider when he needed to establish rapport; but when it came to the underlying goal of his project, Campbell, like all the collectors, became a commentator on and arbiter of his own culture and its representation of the lost state of nature. From Uist he wrote:

While here, I witnessed for the first time, persons singing at the same time they dance: and this is called dancing to *port-na-beul*, being a succedaneous contrivance to supply the want of a musical instrument. This affect is droll enough, and gives an idea of what one might conceive to be customary among tribes but little removed from a state of Nature . . . the men and women sing a bar of the time alternately; by which they preserve the respiration free; & at the same time, preserve the accent & *rhythms* quite accurately – the effect is animating: and having words correspondent to the character of the measure – there seems to be a three-fold species of gratification arising from the union of song and dance – rude, it is confessed – but such as pleases the vulgar, & not displeasing to one who feels disposed to join in rustic pleasures, or innocent amusement.<sup>75</sup>

In his collection, Campbell appears more interested in whether a melody was a “genuine” ancient curiosity than whether it was “melodious.”<sup>76</sup> So for all of Campbell’s investment in and sensitivity toward the material he collected, decisions about what music mattered once again devolved primarily not on aesthetic concerns but on assumptions about what was traditional and authentic.

Perforce these attitudes must affect Campbell’s treatment of the music at hand. Since for Campbell, the “nearer a melody approaches” his universal pentatonic “primary scale of music,” the more it could be reckoned to be “genuine and ancient,”<sup>77</sup> he had clear ideas about what ought to be allowed as authentic to tradition. Campbell was too faithful to his informants to turn all of what he collected into pentatonic versions, based on his own theories of what made music genuine. (This is more than can be said for those who had strong ideas of Scottish music

<sup>73</sup> In one case he relates an anecdote about gaining the trust of his informants even after initially being mistaken for Napoleon! (“Slight Sketch,” ff. 20v–21v.)

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 10r. <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 18r–v. <sup>76</sup> See for example *ibid.*, f. 18r.

<sup>77</sup> Campbell, “Conversation on Scottish Song,” 7.

but did *not* do fieldwork – and bent everything to conform to their ideas of what Scottish music should be.<sup>78</sup>) Even Campbell, though, chose which melodies to include in his collection in the first place. He could also select which variants he liked most, and he must have used his own criteria about authenticity to choose among versions. Unsurprisingly *Albyn's Anthology* has a high proportion of pentatonic tunes and those that approach pentatonicism (tunes in which notes from outside the pentatonic collection appear only as passing tones or ornaments). It seems almost indisputable that Campbell selected tunes and versions in an idiom that came as close as possible to his idea of “ancient” and “genuine” Scottish music.

The tune “Robi Dona Gorach” (“Daft Robin”) is a good example (Example 8a–e). The melody had appeared in an important Scottish violin manuscript back around 1740 (the McFarlan Manuscript).<sup>79</sup> There it includes leading-tones, even if that note was used infrequently and not structurally (8a). Patrick MacDonald, despite his own nascent theories of Scottish modality, had published the tune in a version with leading-tones in the 1780s (8c) – though Daniel Dow’s version of the tune from around the same time or a little earlier has no leading-tone (8b). The variant Burns gave to the *Scots Musical Museum*, from the 1790s (8d), also lacks a leading-tone, as does Campbell’s version (8e), taken down from a well-to-do young woman in Harris.<sup>80</sup> The absence of the leading-tone in Campbell’s version must tell us more about what sounds he liked and considered authentic than what version of the tune is really oldest or most common. (The same may be said of Burns’s selection process for 8d.<sup>81</sup>)

<sup>78</sup> Fink, for example, dismissed the Burns/Thomson versions of some songs, preferring the 1725 *Orpheus Caledonius* versions (*Erste Wanderung*, 101, 108). This was despite the fact that Burns often collected his songs orally, while William Thomson had made no pretext to presenting anything “authentic” (instead framing his collection as pastoral lessons, as we saw in Chapter 2). For one song, Fink went on to reconstruct the “original” version by editing out the fourth and seventh scale-degrees based on his theories (*ibid.*, 108–12).

<sup>79</sup> Vol. 1 is lost; vols. 2–3 are National Library of Scotland, MSS 2084–85 (1740 is the date in vol. 2; in vol. 3 the date is torn off, but it is probably very near 1740).

<sup>80</sup> See *Albyn's Anthology*, 1: 45, and “Slight Sketch,” f. 43v.

<sup>81</sup> The history of individual tunes circulating in Scotland is littered with changes away from and towards pentatonicism. (Kenneth Elliott, in *A History of Scottish Music* [London: BBC, 1973], 46–7, notes for example how the courtly tune “Then Wilt thou goe” picked up pentatonic elements as it circulated in Scotland in the seventeenth century.) The assumption in cases such as this has generally been that the oldest versions are pentatonic, or, when it is clear, as in the above examples, that the older version is the diatonic or even chromatic one, the pentatonic elements in the newer versions are upheld to suggest acceptance by the “folk” – moves toward the “genuine” idiom. But of course the fact that preferences for different scales came to the fore in different times and places indicates that tastes changed across regions, classes, and time.

*“Folk” and “tradition”*

Example 8a: From the McFarlan MS, c. 1740 (NLS MS 2085), 89. With thanks to the trustees of the National Library of Scotland.



Example 8b: From Daniel Dow's *Collection of Ancient Scots Music* (c. 1780), 25.

Robi doana gorach — Daft Robin

A handwritten musical score for two pieces, "Robi doana gorach" and "Daft Robin", presented in a grand staff format with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The first piece, "Robi doana gorach", is written in the treble clef and features a melody with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, some marked with a 'h' for grace notes. The second piece, "Daft Robin", is written in the bass clef and has a simpler melody of eighth and quarter notes. Both pieces end with a double bar line.

*The invention of “folk music” and “art music”*

Example 8c: From Patrick MacDonald, *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* (1784), 25.

A Robaidh, tha thu gùrach.

152 Moderate

Example 8d: From James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, vol. 3 (1790), 266.

The Captive Ribband.

A Galic Air.

257 \* Dear Myra, the captive ribband's mine, 'Twas all my

Slow

faithfull love could gain; And would you ask me to resign, The

sole re-ward that crowns my pain.



"Folk" and "tradition"

Example 8e: From Alexander Campbell, *Albyn's Anthology* (1816), 1: 44.

*Leave thee Loth to leave thee!*

*Quintive*

Ro--bie don--adh, gorr--ach a' còmhaidh gam iarridh; Gun  
 Leave thee, loth to leave thee, My heart how it aches! 'Tis  
 dhinnis mi gam dheoin dheut, nach pos'in thu' 'm bliad -- hra'  
 ho--nour thus, be--lieve, me my soul love--proof makes! My  
 'smor gu'm h' anns a' Tear--lach a ghnadh 'n cois an shliabha' na  
 big swoln bo--som rend--ing, feels now a fier--cer glow; The  
 Ro--bie donadh, gorr--ach a dh' oladh a leine.  
 Host our CAUSE de--fend--ing, I join, to face the foe.

*ff*

*ppp*

Ornamentation was a similarly charged issue in defining a "traditional" idiom. Originally ornaments were rejected by cultural nationalists for their association with "Italian" influence, but as the attributes of Scottish versus Italian music devolved upon the new categories of



national/traditional versus cultivated music within the same country, the issue became how to treat national music in general. No longer was a violation of “national” idiom a problem specifically related to Italian influence, but rather (as we saw in Chapter 3) a problem with “cultivated” composers in general – individuals manipulating what was pure and not rightfully theirs to touch. At this time, many ornaments were clearly removed from transcriptions to bring them in line with the emergent notion of authentic folk style as a pure, simple idiom. Turning back to Examples 8a–e, such a progression is again apparent. The version from the 1740s (8a) is loaded with filigree and trills; the later “authentic” versions contain progressively fewer ornaments and rhythmic decorations, culminating in Campbell’s variant, which moves evenly and steadily without a single trill or other ornament in the voice. This is all despite the fact that early sound recordings made by fieldworkers of Scottish singing show that Highlanders especially often added sung ornaments<sup>82</sup> – which was unlikely to be a trait that disappeared between 1790 and 1900 and then reappeared. (Certainly Highland instrumental music, perhaps because of the necessary birls used to articulate repeated notes on the bagpipe, is full of flourishes and ornaments and probably always was.) Patrick MacDonald had noted in the 1780s that he was more sparing with ornaments relative to the number used by his informants – again in order to make the transcription more legible – thus admitting that the music was often highly decorated in reality.<sup>83</sup> But by ten years later the advocates of “authentic” collection were vociferously protesting ornamentation as a corruption of the natural form of the music. Campbell was harsh on McGibbon for ornamenting “native” tunes with “pedantic garnish”; and a few years after Campbell the strictures became even harsher: George Kinloch’s 1827 collection of *Ancient Scottish Ballads, Recovered from Tradition* printed seventeen tunes “noted . . . down from the singing of those individuals who furnished the ballads to which they apply” – and only two grace notes are present between all of the transcriptions, though four tunes use cadential trills.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, Motherwell later the same year expressed his suspicion that “some of these [Kinloch’s airs] must have been incorrectly noted.”<sup>85</sup> Since Motherwell obviously accepted the variant idea for both texts and

<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Cecil Sharp observed: “In Scotland and Ireland folk-singers are especially given to this habit, and they will often bury their tunes under a profusion of ornament,” whereas, apparently, English singers did not (*English Folk-Song*, 24).

<sup>83</sup> *Highland Vocal Airs*, 4.

<sup>84</sup> George Kinloch, *Ancient Scottish Ballads, Recovered from Tradition, and Never before Published* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1827), xiii.

<sup>85</sup> Motherwell, *Minstrelsy*, xcix.

tunes,<sup>86</sup> what did “incorrect” mean? Likely it was even these few trills to which he was objecting. In Motherwell’s own effort to transmit “purely and undefiled to posterity” the melodies associated with his texts, there are no trills at all.<sup>87</sup> Few collectors seemed bothered to distinguish idiomatic ornaments from non-idiomatic ornaments; rather they got rid of them altogether. (Accompaniment became a similar issue – but at least here most early collectors seemed to consider not only whether accompaniment was allowable, but also what type might be best – often linked to the new idea of ancient and universal modal characteristics that needed to be preserved.<sup>88</sup>)

All of these collectors saw their versions of tunes as the most “genuine” because they presumed that they knew what was really “traditional” – even if the mechanism was less obvious than Donaldson’s example of the amateurs telling the pipers how to pipe.<sup>89</sup> To be faithful to a folk work had come to mean filtering or adjusting for an authentic idiom. Editors selected and edited tunes and variants so they were more pentatonic, rhythmically regular, and unornamented – anything that made their tunes as “simple” and “primitive” as possible. The idea of the folk work as family of valid variants might have brought greater freedom

<sup>86</sup> Motherwell is even careful to specify the specific verse and version of the ballads to which he presents the tunes (taken down by his friend Andrew Blaikie) in order to make sure that the tune variants make sense as accurate descriptions of individual traditional performances (see *Minstrelsy*, Appendix [separately paginated], xv).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix, xxiv. Between the thirty-three tunes Motherwell prints, there are six grace notes (all but one downward-resolving appoggiaturas, and mainly cadential); no trills, and no other ornaments are indicated.

<sup>88</sup> Burns did believe the tunes should be accompanied: “You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. – A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer plays [‘Nae Luck about the house’] & sings it in the same time so charmingly that I shall never bear to see it sent into the world as naked as Mr. What-d-ye-call-um [Ritson] has done in his London collection” (*Letters of Robert Burns*, Letter 644, 2: 318). Burns thought the bass should “at the stops, be full; & thin & dropping through the rest of the air” (*ibid.*, 315). In this he was parroting Tytler, who had prominently claimed that “The proper accompaniment of a Scottish song, is a plain, thin, dropping bass, on the harpsichord or guitar. The fine breathings, those heart-felt touches, which genius alone can express, in our songs, are lost in a noisy accompaniment of instruments. The full chords of a through-bass should be used sparingly, and with judgment, not to overpower, but to support and raise the voice at proper pauses” (Tytler, “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 238). Others, such as Fink, Saussure, Dun (see *Ancient Scottish Melodies*, 334–7), and G. F. Graham (*Essay on the Theory and Practice of Musical Composition* [Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1838], 68, soon came to consider any accompaniment using “modern” harmony as inherently inauthentic.

<sup>89</sup> For a more recent example of performers internalizing such ideas, see McLucas, “Multi-Layered Concept,” 219–30. McLucas compares two recorded versions of the song “The Two Sisters” performed by the Kentucky singer Jean Ritchie and notes that the recording made earlier, when Ritchie was less influenced by academic ideas of what a “folk song” should be, is also less like the criteria of those intellectual definitions. Here the situation is slightly complicated by the possibility that the earlier version was influenced by radio broadcasts of “popular” crooners, however.

to the question of what a “genuine” specimen was, but the application of authenticity as idiom brought just as many constrictions.

***Werktreue* and tradition: printed forms  
of the national music “work”**

The term *Werktreue* was coined as an art-music concept – implying fidelity to the work (here the score) as individual authorial intention;<sup>90</sup> but some version of *Werktreue* becomes regulative any time the notion of authenticity is crossed with the idea of a work as such. It certainly makes sense to apply the word to the way editors presenting versions of a folk tune at the end of the eighteenth century sought to prove or adapt their variant’s “authenticity” to an idealized, abstracted work via musical idiom. The many published collections of national music appearing near the end of the eighteenth century demonstrate the variety of fashions in which the idea of textual authority manifested itself. As the work-concept strengthened simultaneously in both the folk-musical and art-musical realms, different versions of *Werktreue* exerted pressure on the same musicians, performers, collectors, and publishers: in many cases, aspects of tradition-as-idiom combined with elements of score-as-work authoritarianism to govern the way national music was presented.

For example, not all published collections in the late eighteenth century removed ornaments from the tunes, but the connotations of the ornaments changed even in these cases. Claire Nelson has recently considered these collections of Scottish music, concentrating on the fundamental friction between editors who wanted to “modernize” in their presentation of the ancient airs – providing copious ornaments, accompaniments, and other “improvements” – and those who wanted to maintain the “simplicity” of the material in their collections.<sup>91</sup> Where earlier publishers of “Scottish Songs” (Ramsay, William Thomson, etc.) had provided a bare figured bass without much thought for the matter, the issue now became polarized.<sup>92</sup> As Nelson notes, in the wake of the “Ossian” publications members of the musical and philosophical societies and clubs – which included the likes of James Beattie, John Gregory, Lord Kames, and Alexander Gerard – rallied in the last third of the century for simplified arrangements, to live up to the idea of “primitive” national music. On the other hand, in the 1780s and 1790s, there was also an increasing range of highly elaborate arrangements aimed at

<sup>90</sup> See Goehr, *Imaginary Museum*, esp. 231–42 and ch. 9.

<sup>91</sup> Nelson, “Tea-Table Miscellanies,” esp. 597–8.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 601–9. David Johnson also discusses this phenomenon: see *Music and Society*, 144–6.

Scotland’s well-to-do amateur musicians: these included publications by the Italian singers Domenico Corri and Pietro Urbani, both working in Scotland, and also collections from William Napier, William Whyte and the ubiquitous George Thomson.<sup>93</sup> By the 1780s, it was clear there were two really different kinds of transcriptions – the “simple” and the “elaborate.”<sup>94</sup>

The reason for this bifurcation in the late eighteenth century must lie primarily in the practical realm: it is striking that those pushing for simplicity and preservation of the ancient values – for “tradition,” that is – in published music, tended to have an amateur interest in music, to be specialists in other fields (philosophy and poetry for Beattie, medicine for Gregory, law for Kames, antiquarian literature for Ritson, etc.). Meanwhile, those who published the more elaborate transcriptions tended to rely on music for their income (as publishers and entrepreneurs in almost all cases, and as performers as well in the cases of Corri and Urbani). Whereas the discourse on “tradition” and “folk music” was formed largely by non-professional musicians, those who had practical monetary concerns at stake must have recognized that offering the buying public “authentic” versions of ancient works, in a form that was not usable for home music-making occasions, was not a healthy career choice. This latter group of professionals hoped still to treat the tunes they incorporated or varied basically as “popular” material in the oldest sense of that word – shared material to be freely developed, without the excessive dictates of tradition.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Nelson, “Tea-Table Miscellanies,” 609–16. See Domenico Corri, *A New and Complete Collection of the Most Favourite Scots Songs Including a Few English and Irish: With Proper Graces and Ornaments Peculiar to their Character: Likewise the new Method of Accompaniment of Thorough Bass*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Corri and Sutherland, [c. 1783]); Pietro Urbani, *A Selection of Scots Songs, Harmonized, Improved with Simple and Adapted Graces*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Peter Urbani, [1792–1804]); William Napier, ed., *A Selection of the Most Favourite Scots Songs, Chiefly Pastoral*; William Whyte, ed., *A Collection of Scottish Airs, Harmonized for the Voice and Piano Forte, with Introductory and Concluding Symphonies: and Accompaniments for a Violin and Violoncello*, by Joseph Haydn, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: William Whyte, [c. 1804, 1807]); Thomson, ed., *Select Collection*.

<sup>94</sup> Nelson explores a few of the ways the presence of the two divergent trends may be reconciled, noting that the cosmopolitan urge toward European integration must have played a role. Fundamentally, she prefers to leave open the question of how both elaborate and simple collections co-existed, sometimes overlapping in intended audiences – audiences that ought to have shared similar aesthetic principles.

<sup>95</sup> Corri, for example, published a large *Select Collection of the Most Admired Songs, Duets, &c., From Operas In the Highest Esteem, and from other Works in Italian, English, French, Scotch, Irish, &c., &c.* (Edinburgh: John Corri, [c. 1779]; with a fourth book added c. 1795) which seemed to minimize the differences between opera songs and “national airs” in a similar way to older collections. Though there is division of repertoire by volume, the emphasis is on what language is used and on genre rather than on origin-based category; there is also much overlap in vols. 3–4, with “national” airs placed directly next to compositions by famous modern composers – as was done earlier in the century (though now attributions are much more careful).

Nevertheless, times had changed. Even people like Corri and Urbani could not ignore the voices of the folk-as-tradition faction by the time they published. For Allan Ramsay and William Thomson in the 1720s, and even for MacGibbon and Oswald in the 1740s and 1750s, the issue had been how to present an image of Scottish culture that was acceptable to polite society in both Edinburgh and London – their concern with origins was geographical without the complicated addition of differentiating between modern individual origins and authentic traditional collective origins. By the 1780s and 1790s, professionals and editors were forced at least to engage with the widespread notion of folk authenticity. (Notably, this is the exact period when Ramsay himself began to come under attack for betraying “tradition,”<sup>96</sup> even though the concept had not existed when he compiled his collections.) The responsibility of preserving or rescuing tradition as idiom now bore down on all publishers or arrangers; or at least they had to act as though it did for their work to be taken at all seriously. Corri included in his title the claim that his added “graces and ornaments” were “proper” and “peculiar to [the] character” of the songs. And Urbani went further than this in bowing to the new language of authenticity: earlier efforts, he claimed, had used “false and unconnected Harmony, which entirely spoiled the beautiful simplicity of the original Air”;<sup>97</sup> his own graces, “improvements,” and harmonizations were born of “a perfect acquaintance with the simplicity of the original music of this country.”<sup>98</sup> Urbani makes his engagement with fidelity to the folk work explicit by maintaining that his collection contained only genuine old Scots airs in “the best sets [i.e. variants] that could be procured.” Even in the songs that have been turned into duets, “the original Airs are left pure, without the alteration of a single note.”<sup>99</sup> Napier, too, claimed that he “traced” his melodies back to pure sources.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, while the emergence of the purity or authenticity criterion coincided with so many collections that seemed on paper to ornament more than ever before – and to flesh out fuller accompaniments – appearances can be deceiving. In practice, performances from these

<sup>96</sup> These assaults began with figures such as John Pinkerton and Joseph Ritson (see Chapter 3, n. 46) and have continued to the present. For recent criticisms of Ramsay on these grounds, see for example Alexander M. Kinghorn, “Biographical and Critical Introduction,” in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, 4: 148, and Harker, *Fakesong*, 12; or, in very strong terms, Johnson, *Music and Society*, 134. Johnson recognizes that “national music” as Ramsay created it was not attempting to be genuine “folk” music; but he writes as though the idea of genuine folk music did exist at the time, and thus Ramsay was to blame for obscuring it.

<sup>97</sup> Urbani, *Selection of Scots Songs*, Preface to book 1. <sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface to book 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Napier, *A Selection of Original Scots Songs* (vol. 2 of *A Selection of the Most Favourite Scots Songs*), Preface.

new collections were almost certainly no more ornate than earlier performances of the same music. In fact, the opposite is probably true. Previously, in keeping with general Baroque practice, performers had added copious improvised ornaments and accompaniments to the versions of tunes printed in collections. Now, as the idea of maintaining an authentic, traditional idiom set in, the tendency toward writing out ornaments in the later collections must have represented, despite appearances, a reduction – or at least a stricter regulation – of the ornaments permitted.<sup>101</sup> Various facts support this theory: Nelson points out that James Beattie, who campaigned for simplicity of style, still seemed tacitly to accept the level of ornament in George Thomson’s collection, since he contributed to it.<sup>102</sup> And although Thomson added three-part accompaniments, he himself claimed also to present the simplest forms of songs, and stated his belief that “judicious singers” had helped shape more “simple” (and thus presumably “authentic”) versions of the same songs across the century.<sup>103</sup> What is newest about the “elaborate” editions of the Scottish songs is not the ornaments or string parts, then, but the idea of authenticity itself: everything was written out to guarantee the “work” would be “correctly” performed and ornamented. In these collections, the idea of *Werktreue* applies as

<sup>101</sup> Similarly, with the earlier figured bass accompaniments that look empty on paper we should not assume that they would have sounded “simple.” Elaborate and obligato scoring was generally much less common before about 1760 in musical publications of any genre. Thoroughbass harmonizations inherently left many of the key stylistic decisions up to the performers, who were expected to be able to read off the bass and improvise at sight. (Even Oswald’s unaccompanied presentations in the *Caledonian Pocket Companion* would in many contexts have been the basis for improvisatory ensemble performance.) Later in the century, as improvisatory skills were less emphasized in musical education, there was an increasing glut of amateur musicians who could not read figured bass very well, and whose skills improvising ornamentation were also diminished. The scoring and ornamentation that might have adorned a typical performance from William Thomson’s *Orpheus Caledonius* in 1725 now needed to be written out. So, for example, Corri included a page explaining how his carefully prescribed ornaments ought to be sung (*New and Complete Collection*, 1). And from the earliest editions, George Thomson’s Preface to his own collection contains a diatribe, citing Rousseau, on the shortcomings of the figured bass in modern practice, for precisely these reasons. Thomson accordingly gives his accompaniments “plainly express’d in musical Notes, which every young Lady may execute correctly” (*Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* [London: J. Preston/Edinburgh: George Thomson, 1801], Preface, 1). The wording quoted here was added in this edition, but the citation of Rousseau to dismiss figured bass goes back to the first edition of Thomson’s first volume eight years earlier: *Select Collection of Original Scotch* [sic] *Airs* (London: Preston and Son, [1793]), iii–iv.

<sup>102</sup> Nelson, “Tea-Table Miscellanies,” 613–15.

<sup>103</sup> See the Preface of the 1803 edn of the *Select Collection*, 1; and London, British Library, MS Add. 35266. Thomson thought the songs had been *simplified* and improved by singers over the last century, and claims that, in earlier publications “you will find many of the airs actually in a less simple form than we now have them” (MS 35266, f. 130v).



idiomatic fidelity to a work as tradition *and* as fidelity to that traditional work’s manifestation in a printed score.

For all the tighter control and regulation in the new approach, these ornamented collections may ultimately not have sounded very different from amateur performances earlier in the century. Ironically, in terms of sound, the really radical departure from past practice would not have come in the collections that made a token gesture toward “authenticity” in their prefaces or titles, while in fact continuing the amateur music-making from earlier in the century (if now writing out and regulating the allowed ornaments). Instead, the more radical sonic departure came with the collections that appeared on the page most *similar* to the more skeletal presentations in many older collections – but in fact took the new idea of authenticity to folk “tradition” as their alpha and omega. In these collections, an unadorned tune carried very different connotations from an unadorned tune in an early eighteenth-century collection. The “simple” version was no longer a free invitation to a fuller performance, but a strict presentation of “tradition” in and of itself in musical notes. By the 1790s, Joseph Ritson, the crusty antiquary, issued his *Scottish Songs* with no ornaments whatsoever, and no accompaniment. This became the norm for the next generation of collectors, such as Kinloch and Motherwell.

Furthermore, because of the new focus on *Werktreue* – in its various guises – all editors were also facing a decision that had never before presented itself: whether their transcriptions ought to be prescriptive (meant to help an audience play as closely as possible from the notation in a way that approximated the tradition being preserved: making the score a recipe for the work) or descriptive (perhaps difficult or even impossible to play from, but supposedly more accurate as scholarly documentation of the work as traditional oral practice).<sup>104</sup> Earlier publishers of Scottish music had of course taken it for granted that their scores were for practical musical use – what else would they be for? Now, however, much of the debate about whether to “elaborate” or “preserve” the melodies seemed rooted in the dilemma of whether the tunes should be presented for use or for study. If the musical professionals tended toward the former route, seeing their publications as formulae for music-making in the present, the dilettantes and antiquarians tended toward the other answer, because the more important aspects of folk authenticity could thus be properly maintained and controlled. This was a decision that made sense, since their books were often aimed at those with literary interests similar to the editors’, and

<sup>104</sup> The idea of “prescriptive” and “descriptive” notation was formalized by the ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger; see “Prescriptive and Descriptive Music Writing,” *Musical Quarterly* 44 (1958), 184–95.



the printed music was often interpreted as a vehicle for the texts rather than a performance tool. In these collections, Western music that was *not meant to be performed* was for the first time ever being published. Editors were creating “museums” for folk “tradition.”

There were editors who did seek to find a deeper compromise between the two extremes, offering a descriptive glance of the exotic or ancient, but making it available also to be played. With the Perthshire-born, Edinburgh-based music teacher Daniel Dow’s *Collection of Ancient Scots Music for the Violin, Harpsichord or German Flute, Never Before Printed*,<sup>105</sup> the title itself makes clear a desire to present “ancient” music and yet also make it playable. Dow gives many approximations of bagpipe ornaments, and many of his bass lines are deliberately very slow moving, approximating drones in some cases. Another obvious compromise is *The Caledonian Muse*, published in the late 1780s, whose basses vary from a style like that in the older collections to steady drones. In general, these collections remained relatively obscure in the following discourse (though Dow’s had a long subscription list). Such compromises sometimes offered the best of neither world, since purists might scorn the accompaniments, and, from the practical angle, many of the bourgeois ladies and gentlemen who were to be the players were interested in “ancient” Scottish traditions only as far as they fitted into modern social life.

Patrick MacDonald’s 1784 *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* was the exception, in that it was a compromise that did become much more widely influential. It helped that MacDonald detailed his editorial choices, giving those who would use his book a clear idea of how to interpret the notation. MacDonald explains that he adhered to his brother Joseph’s original transcriptions except in the cases of some of the slow, plaintive airs. The problem here was that the “natives” sing these tunes in a “wild, artless, and irregular manner” (2).<sup>106</sup> Joseph had apparently “attempted, as nearly as he could, to copy and express the wild irregular manner . . . and, without regarding the equality of the bars, had written the notes, according to the proportions of time, that came nearest to those, which were used in singing” (2). Patrick judged it “improper, to lay them before the public, in that form,” for the specific reason that one could only have made sense of these transcriptions if one already had a good idea of what that sort of music sounded like (2). Patrick comments on Western notation in a manner that was quite exceptional at a time of great pride in European musical tools: “In the present state of musical notation, little more, than what may be called the elements of ground-work of an air, can be conveyed by it” (3).

<sup>105</sup> Edinburgh, c. 1780.

<sup>106</sup> Parenthetical citations in this paragraph refer to the *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs*.

Nuance could not be noted, and it was better “not to attempt this at all” than to use experimental notation that would render the piece “unintelligible to a stranger” (3). So Patrick ended up regularizing the rhythm so that it could be used as prescriptive notation, while giving the general guideline that the tempo should be rubato – which he sees as the “natural” way to perform music in any case. To balance his concessions to practicality, Patrick was conscientious enough to play his own transcriptions back to the singers; he “never thought his copy of an air accurate, until, upon playing it from his notes, the singer acknowledged, that it was, as nearly as he could judge, the very tune which he had sung” (4).

By the turn of the nineteenth century, then, the concept of tradition had precipitated an engagement with the issues of how to present folk musical “works” in print. This included wrestling with the vexing problems of transcription that still face ethnomusicologists who would note in standard Western notation – or any notation for that matter – music that is not usually passed on in writing (though now, of course, the ultimate “descriptive” transcription is the field recording). Behind this engagement lay always a concern with origins. It was an obsession that had expanded from geographical and temporal concerns to fixate upon specific works as human creations, so that “authenticity” even in the folk realm was inherently bound up with works and authors – even if the authenticating original author(ity) in this case was abstracted and collective.

### **A final myth of origin for traditional music: the benefits of obscurity**

As a summary, let us finish tracing the changes in origin myths offered about Scottish music. The establishment of the tropes of “tradition” at the turn of the nineteenth century supplied the lasting twist to the story. Furthermore, the new ideas about national musical origins could apply not just to Scotland: because the invocation of tradition quickly became a transnational phenomenon, the same explanations would eventually be applied to every other nation’s folk music.

After a century of changing, but specific, assertions about the origins of national music in Scotland, the enduring approach would involve a retreat to a *less* specific narrative. Attention to the specific, initial *Ur*-origins of works had at first contributed the very idea of authenticity, but had then presented increasingly high, almost impossible, standards for proof. Susan Stewart notes:

The eighteenth-century development of an “author” and the eighteenth-century crisis in authenticity must be situated within a history of the establishment and legislation of spheres of originality and accountability in writing . . . In the early part of the eighteenth century, we find writers such as

Allan Ramsay eagerly considering almost any “song” or “poem” as an example of the traditional ballad, but by the 1840s we find writers such as [Robert] Chambers doubting the authenticity of nearly everything.<sup>107</sup>

Of course Allan Ramsay did not really even think about the word “traditional”; for him the music needed only come from the right country. In any case, the musical aspect of ballad-reception followed the same course as the poetic aspect; and, as scholars paid attention to validating authenticity in each case, committing to any single source (era, author, region) to explain *en masse* the earliest origins of a diverse body of national music obviously now opened up several cans of worms.

Already, the first writers after Beattie to propound his theory in more detailed studies began to abstract the idea of “shepherd” creation into generalizations rather than asserting a single symbolic point of origin (whether geographic, professional, or chronological) for all Scottish national music. Ritson insisted that real national music must come from the people, but also noted: “By whom, or under what circumstances, the original or most ancient Scottish tunes were invented or composed, it is now impossible to ascertain.”<sup>108</sup> This cautious trend grew after the turn of the century. George Thomson was hesitant to accept any assertion the national melodies had all been composed in the south of Scotland around the river Tweed, saying there was no evidence – the matter was shrouded in “complete obscurity.”<sup>109</sup> The next generation of collectors of both tunes and texts almost without fail refused to endorse any single geographical or temporal point of origin for an entire body of

<sup>107</sup> Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, 103. <sup>108</sup> *Scottish Songs*, lxxxiii.

<sup>109</sup> See his letter to Hector MacNeill in 1808, London, British Library, Add. MS 35266, f. 130v. Over the rest of the letter, Thomson suggests that William Tytler’s conclusions about the relative ages of different tunes are completely unreliable and conjectural, and that most Scottish songs are probably much more recent than is assumed, since no familiar titles appear in the list of songs mentioned as old favorites in the sixteenth-century *Complaynt of Scotland*, a recent reprint of which had appeared (see Leyden, ed., *The Complaynt of Scotland*). And about the words, he wrote that: “There is some ground for supposing, tho’ it is by no means certain, that a number of the anonymous Songs were written by persons living on the banks of the streams celebrated in those Songs; but whether written by *real* shepherds or *gentle* shepherds, or at what precise time, is a fact utterly hid from us: for after reading every dissertation I could lay my hands on, I have received no light whatever . . .” (London, British Library, Add. MS 35266, f. 131r; and partially cited in McCue, “George Thomson,” 1: 155). The “gentle shepherds” here are a reference to Allan Ramsay’s stylized Scots pastoral *The Gentle Shepherd* of 1725, suggesting that Thomson recognized that the reality of the origins was less important than the ideal they represented. See also the published Preface to the *Select Collection* [London: J. Preston, and Edinburgh: George Thomson, 1803], 3, for similar caveats. Intriguingly, in the 1822 “Dissertation Concerning the National Melodies of Scotland,” Thomson seems to embrace even the geographical details of Beattie’s theory, based on the many song titles that refer to the Tweed district (*Select Melodies of Scotland*, 1: 17). These comments then reappear in later versions of the larger edition.

"national music." In 1841, the Preface to John Turnbull's and Patrick Buchan's collection of Scottish songs began: "To seek, with the view of finding, any positive era for the origin of Scottish Song, would be a hallucination as vivid as that which possessed the renowned Knight of La Mancha"; it can only really be said that music is "natural to Scotland."<sup>110</sup>

Of course origins were more important than ever: without fail, everyone who claimed it was impossible to trace origins fully did their level best to trace them anyway – but the approach changed.<sup>111</sup> Some writers chose to break down songs taxonomically into types, each with its own supposed origins.<sup>112</sup> But most, such as Burns and Motherwell, went further, focusing on the change and development over time of various works – an organic ontological process. As Beattie's shepherds moved from being the *Ur*-source in a specific region to being representatives of the peasantry as a constant shaping force, "tradition" itself could be claimed as the origin of a tune or body of music. It was a story that allowed for a suitable vagueness and mystification. Kirsteen McCue notes that for George Thomson "anonymity lent a mysterious quality which was, for some of Thomson's buyers, a tangible link to the 'folk'"; thus Thomson sometimes stressed the antiquity of a tune, leaving no comment about the words, so the reader might think they were as old as the tune.<sup>113</sup> Obscurity meant no accusations of "impurity" could be proven at the point of origin, and vagueness prevented contradictory explanations; all that was needed to balance such vagueness was a suitable attention to proving authenticity by stylistic idiom, showing that the music was indeed "traditional" – "natural to" its country of origin and a mystified past. The origin myths for Scottish music had passed from Rizzio to James I, to the minstrels, to the shepherds and milkmaids of particular eras or districts; and in the final shuffle, the focus on origins was transferred from single points in time

<sup>110</sup> John Turnbull and Patrick Buchan, *Garland of Scotia* (Glasgow: William Mitchison, 1841), vii.

<sup>111</sup> With the mystification and the changing symbolism in the myths of origin, the older anecdotes might also be used in different ways. Buchan, for example, repeats Tassoni's claims about James I; but unlike Tytler, he no longer takes Tassoni's claims literally to posit James himself as symbolic progenitor of Scottish music. Rather, Tassoni is placed now in a broader context to claim the power and influence of "Scottish melody" and even its role in the "improvement" of Italian music (*Garland of Scotia*, ix; the attribution of the Preface to Buchan is in Farmer, *Music in Scotland*, 357). Robert Chambers takes a similar approach to the Tassoni story (see *Scottish Songs: Collected and Illustrated by Robert Chambers*, 2 vols. [Edinburgh: William Tait, 1829], xi).

<sup>112</sup> Buchan himself did this: "from the bards . . . those airs . . . associated with romances or historical ballads; from the shepherds and pipers the pastoral; and from the minstrels, the successors to the bards, the lively and spirited." All of these could represent the "native purity" of "the airs of Scotland" (*Garland of Scotia*, xii).

<sup>113</sup> McCue, "George Thomson," 1: 156.

to “tradition,” the process of layered but obscure development that suggested an authentic past. And so the story has run ever since.

Because this last approach to the origins of Scotland’s corpus of folk music took the geographical specificity out of musical-categorical claims, it was a theory that could apply to any folk, and was paralleled in Germany and elsewhere. At the start, Herder had been vague (perhaps of necessity) in his own definition of folk music origins. In many of Herder’s writings (and certainly in those of Goethe, Schulz, Schubart, and others in Herder’s wake) anyone can write a “folk song,” as long as it is received and taken up by the “folk.”<sup>114</sup> Several prominent theorists of German folk song did offer formulations similar to Ritson’s shortly afterward, arguing that every “real” folk song must have its earliest origins among the people;<sup>115</sup> so in a sense, the Germans grappled with the same debates later. Arguably, the modern conception of “folk music” necessarily involved considering umbrella theories of *Ur-*origins only to reject or abstract these theories in the end – for this allowed first the dwelling on origins itself to occur, and then the transfer of creativity to the idealized tradition-bearers over time. The Beattie–Ritson theory of shepherd-milkmaid creation and its later German parallels were particularly important, because they opened up the discussion of how “folk” music had its earliest roots in the “people”; but these explanations too had to give way to a vaguer collection of claims unified by the idea of organically evolving tradition.

<sup>114</sup> For example, see Levy, *Geschichte des Begriffes Volkslied*, 49–50, on Goethe. In his essay on “Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker,” Herder had suggested that “Nichts in der Welt mehr Sprünge und kühne Würfe hat, als Lieder des Volks, und eben die Lieder des Volkes haben deren am meisten, die selbst in ihrem Mittel gedacht, ersonnen, entsprungen und geboren sind, und die sie daher mit so viel Aufwallung und Feuer singen, und zu singen nicht ablassen können” (*Werke*, 5: 186). But note that he does not make this a regulative part of the definition of folk song, only a preference, and he did not even express this preference consistently across his writing on *Volkslied*.

<sup>115</sup> Within Germany, an important change came with the work of F. D. G. Gräter in the 1790s. In the third volume of his journal *Bragur*, Gräter translates Tytler’s whole “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” and then, inspired to turn the focus back to Germany, offers his own protracted views in “Über die teutschen Volkslieder und ihre Musik,” *Bragur: ein litterarisches Magazin der deutschen und nordischen Vorzeit*, ed. J. S. Häfflein and Gräter, vol. 3 (Leipzig: H. H. Gräff, 1794), 120–284. For Gräter, unlike his German predecessors, oral tradition is an essential ingredient in true folk music. Gräter thus claims that many of the contents of Percy’s collection are not true folk songs, because they were not originally sung by and passed on orally by the folk (*Bragur*, 3: 208). In the end, he describes a sort of double-creative process for the folk song: it is composed spontaneously, and then takes its final form through oral transmission (*ibid.*, 209–12). (For more information on Gräter, see Levy, *Volkslied*, 60–1; von Pulikowski, *Volkslied*, 32–3, and Lohre, *Percy zum Wunderhorn*, 89–111, esp. 107.) More dogmatic separation by origins occurred in Germany in the first decade of the nineteenth century in the writing of August Schlegel, who claimed that to be *Volkslied* a poem must originate in the lower classes, preferably in the mystical past, and most often anonymously (see Levy, *Volkslied*, 68–9).

Thus the new mythology ultimately extended to “national” or “folk” music from around the world. It has been debated and questioned, but never fundamentally overturned: the dissipation of single-point origins into an organic process, for many individual “works” but also writ large for bodies of national music, actually came to *define* “folk” music – on through Child and other famous collectors and down to the present.<sup>116</sup> (It is what the official IFMC definition of folk music called the “re-fashioning and re-creation of the music by the community that gives it its folk character.”) Eccentric claims about the specific origins for whole folk music corpuses have continued to arise occasionally, but these have generally been neutralized by the consensus path through the center, which rejects any such blanket claims as improvable, and steers attention back to “tradition.”<sup>117</sup>

<sup>116</sup> See for example Bohlman, *Study of Folk Music*, 1–2: “the need to relate folk music to its beginnings persists as an essential and pervasive component of folk music theory” even if “The persistent pursuit of origins belies the inability to ‘know anything definite.’” Bohlman himself begins with a chapter on origins.

<sup>117</sup> Examples of extreme claims on both sides have been the *gesunkenes Kulturgut* explanation (implying that all “folk” songs were the discarded products of individual creations from an earlier “high” culture), and visions of spontaneous group creation based on homogeneous communal feeling. The latter was how Francis Gummere conceived of folk ballad creation; see *The Popular Ballad* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1907), ch. 1, esp. 16–28. But mainstream figures such as Cecil Sharp and Bertrand Bronson have always reverted to the idea of different anonymous reshapings resulting in slow organic creation over time.

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## Organic “art music” and individual original genius: aestheticizing the folk collective

The lasting idea of art music has depended on the reconciliation of art-musical works (and their composers) with the notion of genius. This was a basically Romantic reconciliation. In the later eighteenth century, as long as “art” continued to be interchangeable with “artifice,” it remained opposed to the new idea of primal nature, and thus to genius. Even after the idea of genius had gained a new vitality in the 1760s, the term took time to pick up its familiar connotations as part of art. Rousseau, for example, worshiped genius in a rhapsodic way because of his novel insistence that music imitated *human* nature rather than an unchanging natural order. Still, since Rousseau clung to a version of the mimetic principle (if altered), we cannot expect his influential version of genius to be the nineteenth-century version of artistic genius. William Tytler had closed his 1779 dissertation on Scottish music with an extended quotation on genius from Rousseau’s *Dictionnaire*,<sup>1</sup> and in some respects Tytler’s depiction of James I also approached the idealized Romantic artist of the nineteenth century. Whereas those who had made Rizzio the symbolic father of Scottish music had credited the Italian with great craft, Tytler now held up James I for a quality just the opposite of craft: genius – the rejection of rules rather than training in rules. Tytler presented musical creation neither as skilled combination of preexistent material according to mimetic rules (composer as presenter/craftsman) *nor* singly as a channeling of revelation from above (composer as divine, symbolic channel), but as a quasi-sacred human mental process. Genius, Tytler writes, “is born with us; it is not to be learned.”<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, in other respects, Tytler’s genius, like Rousseau’s, is *not* our familiar Romantic artist. Although a similar acknowledgement of an internal

<sup>1</sup> Tytler, “Dissertation on the Scottish Music,” 240–1.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.



source of inspiration – in which the artist is both deeply human and somehow superhuman – would become central to Kant's idea of genius and later to the pantheistic, organic nineteenth-century conception of art, for Tytler, art and genius simply do not mix. Scottish songs, as "flights of Genius," are by definition "devoid of art."<sup>3</sup> The same language echoes through the writings of all the others championing "national music" in the wake of Rousseau and Ossian: from Gregory to Ritson – and beyond to Leyden and Campbell in their condemnations of "professed composers" at the turn of the new century. Thus, while "national music" had picked up most of the connotations of folk music by the later eighteenth century, the "cultivated" or "artful" music concept in the Anglophone discourse from this time was not yet the modern "art music" concept.

Even when supporters of "cultivated music" created the first canon of "classics" in England at the end of the eighteenth century, they did little to extend the potential for natural genius to modern composers. As William Weber has documented, the champions of these "antient" classics were reacting against modernity in much the same way as the champions of "national music" were doing – in this case expressing their nostalgia for an earlier era of church stability, social stability, or patronage.<sup>4</sup> If cultivation itself did not kill genius (as the "national music" champions claimed), then it seemed the breakdown of patronage and the modern commercial world would finish it off (as those who supported the "classics" believed – though, in fact, even the classics themselves were not often framed in the enraptured terms of genius that national music was, since they were at some remove from pure "nature").<sup>5</sup> Thus while Weber suggests some key points of

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>4</sup> Weber shows how a group of English church musicians, anxious to overcome religious divisions left over from the English civil war, established choral "classics" to suggest stability (see *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 14, 31–74). Another group began to invoke Corelli as a "classic." This Corelli cult bore similarities to the praise of feudal bards by some writers of Percy's ilk: Weber sees it as a search for norms in the cultural chaos as patronage broke down, a nostalgia for an aristocratic guidance of taste that was eroding (*ibid.*, 77–89). Still other English arbiters, anxious for a secular tradition that was also a source of modern cultural-nationalist pride, cast Purcell as their main classic. Whereas those in the cult of Corelli were often Tories, these were often Whigs, more likely to turn to cultural markers of "Britishness" than to royal patronage (*ibid.*, 89–102). These tributaries soon began to merge: Handel and the oratorio tradition helped realize the aspirations of the various classicizing movements by twining them together (*ibid.*, 103–42). And by the mid-1770s, when the "Concert of Antient Music" was established, Weber senses a real solidification of the notion of a canon of classics (*ibid.*, 13).

<sup>5</sup> The reasons why some individuals turned to "national music" and others to musical "classics" as the ideal way to promote their culture must be complicated and diffuse. It is likely that more Scots invoked national music because they did not have indigenous musical "classics" to serve them in the way that a composer such as Purcell, and then Handel, could serve the English. If the Scots were sometimes forced to embrace "national music" for lack of "classics," the English were perhaps forced down the other road: the idea became widespread that the English had no "national

continuity between the "classics" of the eighteenth century and the "classical music" or "art music" of the nineteenth,<sup>6</sup> we must not brush aside the prominent differences either: though a certain reactionary strain remained inherent in *any* canonization, art-composers from Beethoven on sought immediate timelessness – they sought to become (or their promoters sought to make them) *modern* classics by virtue of their own *genius*.<sup>7</sup>

For art music to approach "genius" discursively, it also needed to pull *away* from "science," because science was basically a synonym for artifice in musical discussion. John Gregory in 1766 was still using art(ifice) and science more or less interchangeably in discussing music;<sup>8</sup> and for Gregory, "natural genius" was tempered by both art and science. Around the same time, two influential Scottish contemporaries of Gregory, William Duff and Alexander Gerard, were beginning to separate science from art clearly in their book-length studies of creative genius, and to allow both science *and* art to be compatible with genius, if in different ways. Gerard's work (*Essay on Genius*, 1774), for example, equates genius in science to the creation of truth, and genius in art to the creation of beauty.<sup>9</sup> Still, although the mind had become more "lamp" than "mirror" for Duff and Gerard, both authors belonged to the eighteenth century in that they considered genius in art to be subject to the rules of "judgment" and, more specifically, "taste."<sup>10</sup> These

music." See William Chappell's discussion and his attempt to rectify this "misinformation" in his *Popular Music of the Olden Time: A Collection of Ancient Songs, Ballads, and Dance Tunes Illustrative of the National Music of England*, 2 vols. (London: Cramer, Beale, & Chappell, [1859]), 1: vi–vii.

<sup>6</sup> Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 243–4.

<sup>7</sup> This point is made by Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792–1803* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory writes: "Music is the *Science* of Sounds in so far as they affect the Mind"; two pages later he reiterates, but now music is "the *Art* of variously affecting the Mind by the power of Sounds." Gregory, *Comparative View*, 2nd edn (1766), 83, 85 (at the beginning of "Discourse III"), emphasis mine.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Gerard, *Essay on Genius* (London: W. Strahan, T. Cadell, and Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1774), 317–18.

<sup>10</sup> William Duff, *An Essay on Original Genius and its Various Modes of Exertion in Philosophy and the Fine Arts, Particularly in Poetry* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1767), 6–26, 63–72 etc.; Gerard, *Genius*, 71–95, 391–416. If anything, Duff, writing seven years before Gerard, uses "taste" and "judgment" in a more abstract and mystified way (foreshadowing nineteenth-century trends). Duff depicts genius as a semi-indescribable realm that often manifests itself in "visions": the "original Author" calls "shadowy substances and unreal objects into existence" (*Genius*, 176–7). Poetic art too is semi-transcendent: its "irregular greatness" and "wildness" brings the artist of genius "above the sphere of Humanity," to a "towering height" (*ibid.*, 162–6). For Gerard, on the other hand, genius was one part of the mind, compartmentalized and set scientifically against other parts. It was this very "faculty psychology" that Kant and other more holistic thinkers would soon set about to overturn. On the "mechanical" aspect of genius for Gerard, see Abrams, *Mirror and Lamp*, 157–67.

buzzwords themselves would later be dismissed as representative of the very *rules* (symbolizing the older “scientific” or “mechanical” conception of art as artifice) that the new art of “genius” had the right to break. By focusing on the “ineffable” side of human artistic creation, the nineteenth century would continue to hold art separate from science, but not in Gerard’s clearly antithetical terms. Romantic “art” would *transcend* and synthesize any clear division of science and creative nature, of truth and beauty. As Keats would write: “Beauty is truth; truth beauty.”

Transcendence in general is the key to the novel ways of looking at genius that defined art for the Romantics; rising above the world was a recourse often necessary for artists and musicians at this time. Many writers have pointed to what Martha Woodmansee has called the “interests in disinterestedness”<sup>11</sup> – referring to the fact that those who created the idea of transcendent “art for art’s sake” in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were in fact promoting the arts in ways that seemed to be saving them and their practitioners from sinking into scorn or even non-existence. In order to elevate the modern “original artist” to a protected status – by invoking “authenticity” in art works – the process of individual creation itself was mystified (just as we saw in Chapter 5 how, on the other side of the coin, collective “traditional” origins were mystified to summon the same prestigious stamp of “authenticity”). Edward Young in his 1759 *Conjectures on Original Composition* portrayed the “original artist” as a unique creative source, and he hit on the organic metaphor as a way to promote authorship above earthly authority (describing genius in terms of “vegetable” growth in the mind). In formulations such as Young’s, authorship becomes transcendent – somewhat divine, but still human – just at the moment when anxiety over commodification is highest, and a canon emerging.<sup>12</sup>

The breakdown of patronage and the dilemma of the free marketplace hit the literary world before the musical, and most of the new ideas of art (such as Young’s) appeared first among writers. In Britain these ideas remained relatively contained within the literary sphere in the eighteenth century. The deification of Handel at the end of his life began a period of experiment with transferring the vocabulary to

<sup>11</sup> See Martha Woodmansee, “The Interests in Disinterestedness: Karl Philip Moritz and the Emergence of the Theory of Aesthetic Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century Germany,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 45 (1984), 22–47, repr. also in *The Author, Art, and the Market*, 11–33.

<sup>12</sup> See Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition, In a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison* (London: A. Millar and R. & J. Dodsley, 1759); Rose, *Authors and Owners*, esp. 118–20; Linda Zionkowski, “Territorial Disputes in the Republic of Letters: Canon Formation and the Literary Profession,” *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 31 (1990), 3–22.

music, but the terms of justification were still experimental.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Rousseau and his British followers had only adumbrated a new idea of musical "art" as genius.<sup>14</sup>

In Germany things were different. Although there too it was writers who were the first to be subjected to a merciless and inescapable marketplace (and Young and other British literary figures resonated highly there),<sup>15</sup> in the German lands these literary formulations of authorship inspired much broader philosophical structures. German thinkers posited organic genius as something available to both "primitive folk" collectives and "great artists" in *all* the arts, including – and especially – music. This happened in Germany because there "modern" cultivated music-making, especially instrumental music, was closely linked to the promotion of cultural nationalism,<sup>16</sup> and there were thus many more musicians operating in a marketplace that carried high stakes for their profession.<sup>17</sup> They too came to see themselves as part of a separate, ideal, and living entity – "art" itself – and to disassociate themselves from the stigma of commercialism, even though they were now necessarily operating in a commercial world. (David Gramit notes rightly that this did not mean that professional musicians were cynical and did not believe their own rhetoric; on the contrary, the vital nature of their discourse to their own subsistence meant that they deeply believed in their own arguments and justifications for their music.<sup>18</sup>) In any case, for these reasons, whereas perceptions of *Scotland* galvanized the separation of "national" or "folk music" from cultivated music in

<sup>13</sup> Around the time of Handel's death, the mushrooming discourse on genius (evidenced in writings such as Young's) was changing the views of creation and authorship. Peter Kivy discusses William Mainwaring's posthumous biography of Handel (*Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederick Handel: To Which is Added a Catalogue of His Works and Observations upon Them* [London: R. & J. Dodsley, 1760]), arguing that Mainwaring presents Handel as a modern genius who made his own rules (see Kivy, *The Possessor and the Possessed: Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and the Idea of Musical Genius* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001], ch. 4, 37–56). Still, we should not equate or conflate the terms used to describe Handel's "genius" with those later used to describe Beethoven's, since much of the discourse around what musical originality and genius entailed (melody, harmony, musical organicism, etc.) was in transition at this point, as we shall see.

<sup>14</sup> Rousseau had extended genius both to primitive peoples and to the musician who "makes the whole universe subservient to his art" (Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. "Genie"; cited from the 1769 translation in Grassineau, *Dictionary*, "Appendix," 21). But he had been more concerned with questions of nationality than the marketplace.

<sup>15</sup> On Young's influence in Germany, see Abrams, *Mirror and Lamp*, 198–213; Woodmansee, "Genius and the Copyright," 430–1, 446. The German reaction to Young lasted: still at the turn of the twentieth century, a German writer on the Lied was interpreting Young's ideas to mean that: "Die Poesie der Einzelgenies und der Naturvölker ist ganz allein die echte!" (Uhl, *Das Deutsche Lied*, 21).

<sup>16</sup> For early examples, see Mary Sue Morrow, *German Music Criticism in the Late Eighteenth Century: Aesthetic Issues in Instrumental Music* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), ch. 3.

<sup>17</sup> On this see Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, *passim*. <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–18.

discourse all across Europe (even in German thought such as Herder’s), the reformulation of musical “art” was a largely independent *German* contribution that itself then spread across the Continent.

Crucially, this new art music was dependent on capturing the same values (genius, authenticity, and purity) that had been attributed to the *folk*. In the [previous chapter](#) it became clear that since the “folk” themselves were conjured up by educated nationalists to represent the new concept of a cultural nation, the characteristics of their music were also defined from without. This is more or less the thrust of Harker’s whole book on *Fakesong*: that it has always been bourgeois mediators who define, arbitrate, and idealize the products of their invented folk. Harker is basically right, but it is important to consider some differences in the positions of the champions and disseminators of folk music. Roughly speaking, the outsiders who have defined folk music have fallen into two camps or alignments, and with very different results. First: there were the non-musicians or amateur musicians with moralizing instincts, who tended to stress the purity and authenticity of folk music as *tradition* – that is, as group cultural identity and cultural property. As we have seen, these scholars, the subject of Chapter 5 (and Harker’s book), largely ignored the *aesthetic* qualities of their objects of study: their judgments of melodies and variants generally had to do with authenticity to a presumed traditional idiom rather than aesthetic questions as they were being framed in a blossoming separate discourse. Almost all collectors of folk music after 1800 who were not also interested in serious careers as composers – Cecil Sharp is a good example – took this approach.

Meanwhile, the German professional composers and their supporters around the turn of the nineteenth century represented a second and completely different group of outsiders shaping an idea of folk music for themselves. Tradition and nation (as “nature”) were for them sources of genius that they needed to tap into for their own work. While the folk collectors were censuring the very idea of professional composers touching national music (composers would inherently freight traditional melodies with “pedantic garnish,” in Alexander Campbell’s words), the modern professionals clearly needed to define folk music in a way that it was rightfully theirs to access. They sought to translate into “art” the universality and genius that were attributed to tradition – and thus to conceive folk music in aesthetic rather than historical terms. Gramit sums this up well:

The discursive act of positing of a *Volkston*...was instrumental in the constitution of a distinct high-art culture of music, and it has remained essential to the continued process of citation through which that culture has maintained its identity and authority. It provides a necessary lower term against which a literate, knowledgeable musical culture can be defined while, at the

same time, because of the ambiguity of the concept *Volk* itself, it allows a claim for universal validity for an art nonetheless in some way rooted in the *Volk*.<sup>19</sup>

This chapter will consider how the new lasting concept of “art music” came to depend on this particular relationship to folk music.

**Herder and German idealism: conceiving  
a new organic, synthetic “art”**

Having in Chapter 3 downplayed the traditional assertions about Herder’s personal contributions to the idea of folk music, I suggested that in some ways his contributions were undervalued as well. Indeed, Herder’s most original contribution has not really been pointed out – even by his greatest German promoters – perhaps because to understand how Herder did add something new to the discourse on folk music, one must focus on the “art” side of the binary, and once again on the folk/art relationship as a whole.

Herder’s writing about *Volkslied* changed within the short period between his coinage of the term in the early 1770s and his Introduction to the 1778–9 collection of *Volkslieder*. In the essay on “Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples” (published 1773, but probably written a couple of years before), Herder was writing much like his British contemporaries discussing “national music.” He sought a European counterpart to the “primitive” music that had been discovered around the world, and he was excited by the cultural-nationalist significance that could be read into this body of music. (He especially wanted to voice his conviction that, among the country people [*Landvolks*], “we Germans too” had folk songs like the “Scottish Romances.”<sup>20</sup>) Herder’s nationalism had some elements specific to his frustration with German feudalism; and more than many of his British contemporaries, he also downplayed the idea of “taste” and deliberately lost himself in the effects of the poems he loved. But this was as far as the differences between him and the British writers went at this point. Herder’s primary aesthetic terms were the same as those of his fellow Rousseau- and Ossian-influenced scholars in Britain: he allied “nature” to his “folk song,” just as they had come to use “natural” and “national” music interchangeably, and he too used the term “art” (*Kunst*) in a way that signified artifice and science rather than “art” in the nineteenth-century sense; he sought in *Volkslieder* an antidote to “artificial, scientific thinking” (*künstlicher, wissenschaftlicher Denkart*)

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 66. For a nearly exact parallel framed in literary terms, see Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, 103.

<sup>20</sup> “Sie glauben, daß auch wir Deutschen wohl mehr solche Gedichte hätten, als ich mit der Schottischen Romanze angeführt; ich glaube nicht allein, sondern ich weiß es” (Herder, *Werke*, 5: 189).



since they represented "more nature, than art" (*mehr Natur, als Kunst*).<sup>21</sup> (Indeed, he enjoyed using the adjective "gekünstelt" as an insult to mannered style.<sup>22</sup>) So far, Herder had introduced nothing by the word "Volkslied" that was not independently becoming embodied in the idea of "national music" in English.

However, by the end of the 1770s Herder had muddled his simple opposition of nature and art in quite a distinctive way. Elements of his thought remained consistent,<sup>23</sup> but through the middle of the decade he had been working out an overarching organic worldview, based on the idea that all parts of the universe were driven by a single vital force (*Kraft*). Herder consequently came to maintain not only that specific artworks could be generated and interpreted via organic metaphors (in which the path of the work is contained naturally, bound as around a kernel or seed (*Kern*) – an idea he had proposed in his writing on Shakespeare from earlier in the decade<sup>24</sup>), but also that the organic metaphor could be expanded to cover the workings of individual genius of all sorts, and at the same time the entire universe. In one essay of 1778, Herder specifically considered the idea of genius, distilling it (and the rest of the universe) down to organic seeds or germs (*Keime*) with the potential to spread and grow ever greater.<sup>25</sup> Herder was basically dealing at this point with a conception of "art" as a reconciliation of "pure nature" with artifice via the organic unity of the universe. Thus when he wrote his Preface to the second volume of his folk song collection in 1779, *Volkslied* still represented nature, but *Kunst* had ceased to be its facile opposite. Herder no longer proposes *Volkslied* as a sparkling natural alternative to mannered "art" song, but rather as "material" for poetic "art" (*Materialien zur Dichtkunst*), as raw mined metals waiting to be forged into something greater.<sup>26</sup> Art here implies a

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: 164, 191.    <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: 164, 203, etc.

<sup>23</sup> In his 1778 essay "Ueber die Wirkung der Dichtkunst auf die Sitten der Völker in alten und neuen Zeiten," Herder proposed views, echoing John Brown, about the unfortunate separation of music and poetry through the arrival of the printing press and the decline of minstrels – and he called for a partial return to earlier simplicity and practice, to escape the "Kultur der Wissenschaften" (see *Werke* 8: 411–13).

<sup>24</sup> This was the essay "Shakespear," also published in *Von Deutscher Art und Kunst* (see esp. *Werke*, 5: 222–6). The idea of organicism as a formal concept would of course become a mainstay of nineteenth- and twentieth-century aesthetics. For a musical discussion of this phenomenon, see Ruth A. Solie, "The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 4 (1980), 147–56.

<sup>25</sup> See Abrams, *Mirror and Lamp*, 204–5. Herder's essay in which he makes this convergence is "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele"; see esp. Herder, *Werke*, 8: 223–7. See also Clark, *Herder*, 217–28.

<sup>26</sup> His collected materials "erscheinen unter dem bescheidensten Namen, 'Volkslieder'; mehr also wie Materialien zur Dichtkunst [and one could say Tonkunst as well], als daß sie Dichtkunst selbst wären... Mein einziger Wunsch ist, daß man bedenke, was ich liefern wollte, und allenfalls höre, warum ich dies und nichts anders geliefert habe? Mich dünkt, es ist weder Weisheit noch Kunst, Materialien für gebildete Werke,



final, higher product – whether poetic or musical. Indeed, Herder himself would later, in his *Kalligone* (an 1800 counterpoint to Kant’s third critique), detail this idea of art as a mystical force papering over the potential division between science and nature. The true artist (as opposed to the “mere” craftsman or untrustworthy theorist) is the one who can both understand and create.<sup>27</sup> Thus it is no contradiction to say that nature herself produces the greatest art (*Kunst*).<sup>28</sup> In *Kalligone*, Herder also considers music’s newfound power independent of poetry and dance, and explicitly extends the idea of genius to living professional composers: one who is “composing with genius and passion . . . is preoccupied with other matters than counting and calculating. It is scarcely credible that a *Mozart*, a *Gluck*, or a *Haydn*, could calculate thus and at the same time create such magic.”<sup>29</sup>

Thus – while the word “art” occasionally remains in its older usage (meaning artifice, as in Tytler, Gregory, Campbell, and the earlier Herder, etc.) – Herder’s later writing also presents a new “art,” something that is never derogatory. Rather, it is the opposite: a mystical, organic synthesis of natural genius with the old art-as-rules. Herder had begun deliberately to blur the local or individual with the universal, and the studied with the “natural,” via his strong sense of a universal “purely human” “empathy” that “transcends [*erhaben*] . . . arbitrary conventions” and provides an “ideal that extends to all people and all ages.”<sup>30</sup> Through this empathic sense, Herder insisted that individual character and universal validity could co-exist in the same music. He maintained that “the intellect’s musical ear will still correlate [different musics], [simultaneously] appreciating

gebrochnes Metall, wie es aus dem Schoos der grossen Mutter kommt, für geprägt klaßische Münze, oder die arme Feld- und Waldblume für die Krone ansehen zu wollen, damit sich König Salomo oder ein lyrischer Kunstrichter, der etwa mehr als er ist, krönet” (Herder, *Werke*, 25: 331–2). I do not think the sarcastic jab in the last line at the connoisseur who fancies himself wiser than King Solomon undermines the sincerity of what Herder is saying in the rest of this statement; the line about “Materialien zur Dichtkunst” is certainly direct in tone. This statement builds on gradual changes in Herder’s thought over the decade. In his 1774 Preface, Herder had mentioned that all of the great British poets (Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, Sidney, Chaucer, etc.) had been fans of the old songs, as their styles show (*Werke*, 5: 8), but he did not elaborate yet on the idea that “folk songs” could be worked organically into great individual poetry.

<sup>27</sup> “Wer kennt, ohne zu können, ist ein Theorist, dem man in Sachen des Könnens kaum trauet; wer kann ohne zu kennen, ist ein bloßer Praktiker oder Handwerker; der echte Künstler verbindet beides” (Herder, *Werke*, 22: 125).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 22: 126–7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 22: 66. This translation is cited from Peter le Huray and James Day, eds., *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 256.

<sup>30</sup> These quotes are from an extract of Herder’s reprinted posthumously in the *AmZ* 15 (1813), 1. The English translation cited is from le Huray and Day, eds., *Music and Aesthetics*, 252–3.

each in its individuality and raising it to the sphere of the universal [*Allgemeine*]."<sup>31</sup>

In this framework, folk and art became mutually reliant: if Herder presented his *Volkslieder* now as "material for art" – that is, as somehow dependent on individual genius to become art – then that "art" was at the same time dependent on the "folk" base if it was to be great and universal. Since, for Herder, folk song, though lacking the status of art in and of itself, offered a shared, genuine sentiment, it was a necessary root for any individual work if that creation was to be "noble" and "living." He writes in the 1779 Introduction that "The most noble and living of the Greek poetry" [*Dichtkunst*] was so because it drew on a living folk tradition as its deep source (*Ursprung*), and thus he can speak of Homer as a great poet *tout court*, because Homer is somehow also a great *folk* poet.<sup>32</sup> To be an artistic genius now meant to grow organically out of the national and universal genius, to synthesize achievement (gained through the learning that had been associated with the old rational art-as-science approach) with an ineffable quality of inspiration drawn from a folk wellspring that was universally human, but channeled through the individual.

Though Herder seems to have developed his own version of the theory, the idea of organic synthesis itself was not unique to him. Indeed, synthesis of dialectic categories, via ubiquitous organic metaphors, was becoming the German approach to most aesthetic and philosophical questions, and is undoubtedly one of the central tenets of Romanticism and Romantic art.<sup>33</sup> Herder's intellectual antagonist Kant posited a process of synthetic reconciliation in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, while Hegel would famously raise the synthetic principle in dialectic to a central maxim in its own right (at the same time synthesizing for himself various oppositional strains from Herder and Kant).<sup>34</sup> Long before Hegel, though, Kant's work had already influenced

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*    <sup>32</sup> Herder, *Werke*, 25: 314.

<sup>33</sup> At least one writer has posited synthesis as the primary tenet of Romanticism (Max Deutschbein, *Das Wesen des Romantischen* [Coethen: Otto Schulze, 1921]). See also René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 197, 203, 214, 218, and esp. 220; Nicholas Riasanovsky, in *The Emergence of Romanticism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) joins organic synthesis to the idea of pantheism in his formulation (5, 91, 93, 97, etc.).

<sup>34</sup> See Bernd Sponheuer, *Musik als Kunst und Nicht-Kunst: Untersuchungen zur Dichotomie von "hoher" und "niederer" Musik im musikästhetischen Denken zwischen Kant und Hanslick* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1987), 37–59, for an in-depth discussion. See also Helga de la Motte-Haber, *Musik und Natur: Naturanschauung und musikalische Poetik* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 2000), 41–8. De la Motte-Haber's argument – that Hegel (later reflected in Hanslick) represents a version of idealism in which nature is more clearly separated from art than in Kant and Schelling – is interesting, and reminds us that there were many different approaches to aesthetics possible within the German idealist movement. However, in terms of direct influence on the musical world, it seems that the tools of synthesis often overrode the details of specific philosophical writings. ("Nature" also took many different forms within all of these tracts, so that it

creative artists: Schiller, for example, used Kant's synthetic approach to solve the dilemma of how great literature could transcend the potentially destructive dichotomy between the "naïve" and the "sentimental." Rather than pitting the sentimental directly against the naïve, Schiller claimed that naïve nature was opposed to reflective *artifice*; and by citing Kant's "categories" he proposed that the "sentimental" was actually a reconciliation of these two in a perfected form of poetry, rather than a simple opposite of the naïve.<sup>35</sup> Despite Schiller's associations with "classicism," *Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung* thus stands, in 1795–6, not only as a signpost of the inevitable awareness of temporal separation that had been dissipating the older generic pastoral, it also marks one of the first examples of a "Romantic" artist himself proposing a solution that rises magically above the posited gulf between civilization and nature.<sup>36</sup>

Although the idealistic jargon of the professional philosophers was mediated back to the artistic world not only by Schiller, but also by the likes of Tieck, Novalis, the Schlegels,<sup>37</sup> and in England, Coleridge, Herder's more practical version of synthesis offered a particularly direct path for creative artists. Here the abstracted category of nature (as human "universal") maps specifically onto folk song, while the new "art" itself parallels Schiller's "sentimental" – becoming a bridge between naïve universal nature and individual artifice or intellect. In the musical realm, J. F. Reichardt was by the 1780s showing young composers how to absorb *Volkslied* into their work, and C. F. D. Schubart was praising the universal nature of *Volkslied* while suggesting implicitly that great composition would be organically rooted in this source.<sup>38</sup> Others soon followed.

cannot be entirely boxed off into one area of the discussion – such as the question of imitation or expression.)

<sup>35</sup> See Peter Szondi, "Das Naïve ist das Sentimentalische: Zur Begriffsdiagnostik in Schillers Abhandlung," *Euphorion* 66 (1972), esp. 197–206. See also Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly's Introduction in her translation *On the Naïve and Sentimental in Literature* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1981), esp. 15–16; and the annotations of William Mainland in Schiller, *Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1951), 135–6, n. 184. Hegel himself considered Schiller an important forerunner in developing the "three-stage philosophy of 'reconciliation'" (Constantin Behler, *Nostalgic Teleology: Friedrich Schiller and the Schemata of Aesthetic Education*, Stanford German Studies 26 [Bern: Peter Lang, 1995], 180).

<sup>36</sup> Goethe at one point talked of Schiller's "sentimental" as being the basis for the Schlegels' "Romantic" (see Wellek, *Criticism*, 133).

<sup>37</sup> On the mediation of abstract idealist concepts of transcendence and synthesis to musical aesthetics, see Mark Evan Bonds, "Idealism and the Aesthetics of Instrumental Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Association* 50 (1997), 387–420; and Sponheuer, *Musik als Kunst und Nicht-Kunst*, ch. 2, esp. 57–8.

<sup>38</sup> See Reichardt, "An junge Künstler," *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin* 1 (1782), 1–7, esp. 4–6; Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, ed. Ludwig Schubart (Vienna: J. V. Degen, 1806), 3, 69–70, 121, 238–9. Much of Schubart's work was probably written in the mid-to-late 1780s when he was in prison; it was

Positing that artworks could synthesize the naïve folk collective into individual creation finally reconciled art and genius: it made possible the claim that "sentimental" individual composers could tap into the quality of primal "genius." Genius remained the opposite of rules, but as it was absorbed into the higher category of "art," it too became a synthetic agent – bridging "scientific" intellect with the "pure dictates of wild nature." Artistic geniuses dispensed with rules that could be codified in such forms as generic convention, and instead followed their own "higher" rules – direct revelations of nature channeled through the individual. Geniuses broke conventions, but set the bar for later artists: in Kant's words, genius must "give the rule."<sup>39</sup> The first composer to be set up by his supporters as the embodiment of this new synthetic genius was Beethoven, and he easily internalized this role in his own thinking.<sup>40</sup> (A familiar series of anecdotes, real or apocryphal, illustrates this. When Ferdinand Ries apparently mentioned parallel

published posthumously and is set up as a sort of universal history, beginning of course with the usual "ancient and Oriental" roots. When Schubart goes through the nations of the modern world, he begins each with a discussion of the character of their national/folk music, and then moves directly into considering their famous musicians, as a *natural outgrowth of this basic collective character*. Schubart also recommended the direct study of "Volkslieder" in order to learn to set songs that would be "taken up by the folk" (*Ideen*, 354).

<sup>39</sup> Abrams, *Mirror and Lamp*, 201–2. See also Goehr, *Imaginary Museum*, 156–63, and on Kant's formulation of this model, Kivy, *Possessor and Possessed*, 106–16. Scientific or mathematic approaches to music could have a place within Romantic art, as long as they were absorbed organically. John Neubauer has argued that musical "Romanticism" consisted of a new invocation of Pythagorean mathematical formalism in music (*Emancipation of Music*, 7–9, 193–210). Neubauer makes a good case that mathematical formalism was central to the early German Romantics (Schiller, Körner, Tieck, Wackenroder, Novalis, and Hoffman); but obviously there was something that set this invocation of divine order apart from earlier (for example medieval) considerations of music as mathematical. Neubauer in effect concedes this, noting that "Wackenroder and Tieck's notion of music bridges inwardness and form" (*Emancipation of Music*, 200). In other words, we are back to synthesis, born of the new conscious separation of the humanity from "nature" and the longing to transcend this by stressing the ego while at the same time seeing it as part of a pantheistic whole. Hence for Wackenroder, "Wissenschaft" remains an important quality of music, but it becomes a mystical, secret subcomponent, synthesized with "Gefühl" (see "Das eigentümliche innere Wesen der Tonkunst, und die Seelenlehre der heutigen Instrumentalmusik," in *Werke und Briefe* [Heidelberg: Scheider, 1967], 220–7; cited in John Daverio, *Music and the German Romantic Ideology* [New York: Schirmer, 1993], 5).

<sup>40</sup> For an in-depth discussion of this phenomenon see DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*. Kivy in his own consideration of genius (*Possessor and Possessed*, esp. 175–217) sets himself up in opposition to DeNora. However, Kivy's book complacently takes musical genius as a universally recognized idea, and asserts repeatedly that it is "common sense" that Beethoven represents such genius. Since Kivy does not in any way examine or contextualize the aesthetic criteria Beethoven's music fulfills (instead making claims such as: "The way to show whether or not Beethoven's Seventh Symphony is or is not incoherent is, clearly, to examine the symphony itself, not the motives of its supporters or detractors," *Possessor and Possessed*, 196), he seems smugly oblivious to the fact that the very criteria for determining "coherence" were constructed historically, and largely around Beethoven himself. Thus, to me, Kivy's

fifths in a Beethoven quartet, noting that all the “theoreticians” forbade them, Beethoven is said to have responded: “And so I allow them!”; at another time Beethoven apparently told Anton Halm “I may do it [break the rules], but not you.”<sup>41</sup>) Beethoven’s own rules were meanwhile accepted as the next set of “universal” rules – his music obviously seen as transcending the borders between the individual and the collective, and between civilization (rules) and nature.

In sum, from this point onward, folk and art were never direct opposites (as “national” and “cultivated” had been). Rather, “folk”/freedom/inspiration and “science”/rules were opposites, while “art” synthesized the two on a new level through individual genius (see Figure 6.1), simultaneously also synthesizing the collective and the individual aspects of the earlier categories. In this sense, Herder himself did play a part in finalizing the modern concept of folk music – not for the reasons usually given, but rather by helping to shift the definition of “art music” and putting that new concept into a different relationship with the older idea of national or natural music. Folk music could now be aestheticized, through great art; and, as a result, that art could now claim to be both individual and national in its original genius, both present and past, both local and general – in short, timeless and universal.

### Creative issues in aestheticizing the folk

Let us consider this framework first from the side of *poiesis*, from the composer’s own engagement. In 1931, over a century after Herder’s influence first spread, Béla Bartók presented a heuristically elegant model that clearly articulated the principles that had been guiding aestheticizing approaches to the folk collective ever since. Bartók classified three levels of ties between art music and folk music. First, the art music composer could use “real” folk melodies or fragments; second, “invented” folk themes could be used; and third, the composer could simply try to create a folk atmosphere – in this last case a sort of general folk consciousness is absorbed into the music.<sup>42</sup> One might think of these methods as quotational, imitative, and internalized. Since Beethoven served as the archetype of art-musical genius, let us look at his own use of these different processes by contrasting two of his most direct engagements with the folk: first, his settings of Scottish “national songs” commissioned by George Thomson, and second, the “Ode

complete dismissal of DeNora’s argument overwhelmingly misses the point – that the organic idea of genius created Beethoven’s aesthetic, and our reception of him.

<sup>41</sup> Both these anecdotes are cited from Kivy, *Possessor and Possessed*, 136–7.

<sup>42</sup> Bartók, *Essays*, selected and ed. Benjamin Suchoff (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 343–4 (In “The Influence of Peasant Music on Modern Music”).

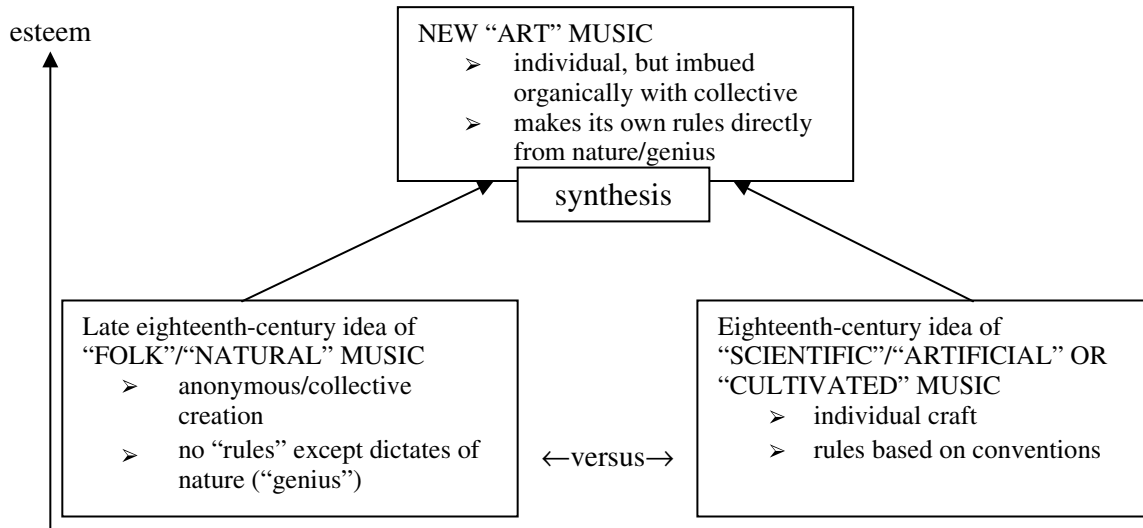


Figure 6.1

to Joy" from the Ninth Symphony. The songs – being settings of preexisting melodies – belong very much to Bartók's first category, while the "Ode to Joy" combines the imitative and especially the internalized methods of integrating folk material.

Thomson had already commissioned the composers Pleyel, Kozeluch, and Haydn to write settings for the melodies he had collected, but Beethoven's own attitude to the work represented a concrete change from his predecessors.<sup>43</sup> He was definitely not the first to consider the difficulties presented in setting the often modal Scottish melodies to modern harmony. In Britain, Tytler had begun to touch on these points as early as 1779. Of Thomson's previous European harmonizers, the Czech composer Kozeluch had certainly been aware of the Otherness of his material: at first he had sent back the melodies, assuming that the various offending pitches were copying errors.<sup>44</sup> Kozeluch also told Thomson that his work had been "diabolique," and apparently confided in Thomson's Vienna go-between, Alexander Stratton, that he found most of the airs to be "une musique barbare" in defiance of the rules of the art.<sup>45</sup> Beethoven, however, was different in that he turned Kozeluch's reluctant awareness of the music's "difference" – which for the older composer had been nothing but bother – into a positive challenge. He was the first to treat his preexisting melodies directly as natural folk Other and to confront the aesthetic dilemmas thus implied. This set a new precedent, after which it became impossible for professional composers to use these melodies without consciously broaching the question of how to transform this "naïve" folk music (as tradition) into aesthetic art.

<sup>43</sup> On Beethoven's settings in general, see Barry Cooper, *Beethoven's Folksong Settings: Chronology, Sources, Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Marianne Bröcker, "Die Bearbeitung schottischer und irischer Volkslieder von Ludwig van Beethoven," *Jahrbuch für musikalische Volks- und Völkerkunde* 10 (1982), 63–89; Donald W. MacArdle, "Beethoven and George Thomson," *Music and Letters* 37 (1956), 27–49; Roger Fiske, *Scotland in Music*, ch. 3; Richard Hohenemser, "Beethoven als Bearbeiter schottischer und anderer Volksweisen," *Die Musik* 10/6 (1910), 323–38, and 10/7, 23–39; Felix Lederer, "Beethoven's Bearbeitungen schottischer und anderer Volkslieder" (Inaugural diss., Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn, 1934); Max Unger, "Zu Beethovens Volksliedbearbeitungen," *Die Musik* 34 (1942), 210–12; Willy Hess, "Beethoven's kontinentale Volksliedbearbeitungen," *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 11 (1970), 134–45.

<sup>44</sup> London, British Library, MS Add. 35263, f. 31r. (Kozeluch sent the pieces back for correction since he felt ill-equipped to "correct" them himself without destroying the Scottish "gout nationale.")

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 34v. At the end of her last chapter, Claire Nelson suggests that in some of Kozeluch's settings, the composer was actively seeking to iron out "national" or "folk" features into a "universal" style. ("Scotland in London's Musical Life," 309–19). To me, this ironing out indicates that Kozeluch actually did all he could to avoid the implications of the melodies as natural, pure folk music.



Beethoven himself attacked the process eagerly, professing to Thomson a particular fondness for the Scottish airs.<sup>46</sup> As Barry Cooper has pointed out, though he called some of the melodies “disorderly” (*unordentlich*) in his diary, it was out of interest for the challenge of setting them.<sup>47</sup> The tunes might have struck him occasionally as strange, but Beethoven spoke of working on them “con amore,”<sup>48</sup> and spending a long time finding just the right harmonies to preserve the “simplicity” and “character” of the melodies.<sup>49</sup> He never seems to have taken up Thomson’s offer that he could change small things in the melodies if he wanted to, or at least what few minor alterations he did make amounted to adding in more rhythmic snaps, rather than ironing out modality.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, Beethoven seems to have begun to conceive a “universal” ancient modality, conflating various primitive Others, just at the time he was working on these settings and attempting to capture their special “character.” In 1815, in a sketchbook he also used to work on two folk song settings for Thomson, Beethoven jotted down notes for writing an opera about Bacchus, in which the dissonances would not be resolved, or would be differently resolved, because “our refined music is not to be thought of in those barren times.” These opera sketches themselves include a prominent melody marked “Volkslied.”<sup>51</sup> And in 1818, Beethoven apparently planned a “pious song in a symphony in the ancient modes.”<sup>52</sup> While this never came to fruition, we know of course of his experiment with modality in the “Lydian mode” slow movement of the late A minor Quartet (Op. 132). Beethoven thus seems one of the earliest composers to internalize the folk and art categories and deliberately use ideas from his conception of naïve, natural folk music – both for his settings and as “Romantic” inspiration spurring his other compositions.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>46</sup> See London, British Library, MS Add. 35263, f. 189v, and Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 201.

<sup>47</sup> See Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 157–9. Beethoven also wrote under one of his settings about how one could find a “natural” harmony for the “strangest sounds in melody” (cited *ibid.*, 158).

<sup>48</sup> Letter to Thomson, July 1810, London, British Library, MS Add. 35263, f. 322r.

<sup>49</sup> See the letter to Thomson of 21 Feb. 1818, cited in Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 159.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>51</sup> See Gustav Nottebohn, *Zweite Beethoveniana* (Leipzig: Peters, 1887), 2: 329–30. The sketchbook is now known as “Scheide” (see Douglas Johnson, ed., *The Beethoven Sketchbooks: History, Reconstruction, Inventory* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985] 241–6).

<sup>52</sup> The symphony was to have “Greek myth, *Cantique Ecclesiastique*” and a “feast of Bachus [sic]” (Thayer, *Life of Beethoven*, ed. Elliot Forbes [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967], 2: 888).

<sup>53</sup> Haydn seems, unsurprisingly, not to have spent much time consciously considering his settings as a dialogue between himself and a “folk” – between individual and collective, modern and ancient – though his settings show more sensitivity and effort than Kozeluch’s. Nelson discusses William Shield’s description of Haydn working on

Some writers have suggested that Beethoven dusted off the airs on commission to Thomson because he needed money to fund the serious music about which he cared more;<sup>54</sup> but this is a distorted view. Beethoven considered his work on the airs serious and artistic and made this clear in several of the letters he sent to Thomson.<sup>55</sup> Among other things, he treated his settings as finished, organic “art” compositions, which caused tensions with Thomson. Thomson was in the habit of continually suggesting changes to his commissioned composers in order to simplify the piano and other instrumental parts for the Scottish ladies. After several complaints and requests for changes from Thomson, Beethoven wrote back: “I am not accustomed to retouching my compositions; I have never done so, thoroughly convinced that any partial change alters the character of the composition. I am sorry that you are the loser, but you cannot blame me, since it was up to you to make me better acquainted with the taste of your country and the little facility of your performers.”<sup>56</sup> This was not an excuse given because Beethoven had better things to do than work on the songs, for, as Cooper points out, Beethoven did try to comply with Thomson; only, rather than adjusting and simplifying what he had already written, he provided completely new settings in this case.<sup>57</sup> It seems that Beethoven really did consider his settings of these tunes to be organically held together (he even thought a good deal about the order in which his arrangements should be organized);<sup>58</sup> no one part could be changed without “killing” the rest for him.

Thus Beethoven differed from someone like Kozeluch not only in that he saw the modal features of the melodies as a primitive strength, but

these tunes, suggesting that he did indeed pay attention to the character of each tune when he set it (see “Scotland in London’s Musical Life,” 104) – though obviously this is not the same thing as acknowledging their difference as representatives of “tradition” and antiquity. (Shield’s own views may have influenced his description of Haydn at work on the tunes as well.) The closest I have seen Haydn come to thinking of his settings as a kind of mediation between folk and art is his rather vague declaration in a letter to Thomson that all students of composition should try their hand at “this type of music” (the translation is Karl Geiringer’s; see his “Haydn and the Folksong of the British Isles,” *Musical Quarterly* 35 [1949], 185). As Haydn got older, he also secretly delegated many of the settings commissioned of him to his student Neukomm (see Fiske, *Scotland in Music*, 68–9). Marjorie Rycroft has recently finished editing Haydn’s complete Scottish song-settings for Thomson; see also the critical notes in this edition: *Joseph Haydn Werke* 32/3 (Berlin: G. Henle, 2001).

<sup>54</sup> For an example, see Richard Aldrich, “Beethoven and George Thomson,” *Music and Letters* 8 (1927), 234–42, esp. 242. This idea is extended from some conclusions of Thayer’s (see *Life of Beethoven*, 2: 715–16). For more discussion and refutation of this perception, see Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 200–1.

<sup>55</sup> Cooper also points out that at the beginning of the correspondence, he referred to his work as harmonization, but was soon calling the pieces his “compositions” (*Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 198).

<sup>56</sup> Cited *ibid.*, 18; the translation is Emily Anderson’s. <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>58</sup> See *ibid.*, 111.

also in that he was confident of his own right as an individual (and genius) to break the same “rules” for the sake of art.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps because he took the work seriously, as a call to push the envelope of organic art, Beethoven experimented with various stark methods in treating the modality of the tunes. This is evident especially in tunes displaying the so-called “double-tonic” alternation between two chords a whole step apart. Beethoven was willing to try the strangest effects in harmonizing these, without attempting to paper over this feature as a barbarism in the original. Sometimes he moves directly: his setting of “Come Fill, Fill my Good Fellow” alternates rapidly between G minor and F major from measure to measure with only a fleeting secondary dominant on the last eighth note of each measure to bridge the two (see Example 9). But in another double-tonic melody, which Beethoven set twice – as “The Highlander’s Lament” and as “Highland Harry” – he put forth in the “Highland Harry” setting a truly odd experiment. Instead of setting the tune in D minor with C major as a contrasting sonority, he placed the entire setting in C, with a dominant pedal on G running from start to finish (Example 10). Needless to say, this forces the melody, which on its own certainly seems to center on D rather than C, into a very odd context.<sup>60</sup> Beethoven has been accused of having no sense of the Scottish modality: in some ways perhaps he did not; but it seems unlikely to me that he could have heard this melody so “wrong” that he thought it was centered on the lower pitch (since he elsewhere treated the double-tonic more conventionally, including in his own other setting of this same tune). More likely, he was insensitive to Scottish modality only insofar as he considered all modality “ancient” and universal, a way to integrate the wildness of natural folk genius into his own individual music. In this sense his experiments were inspired, at least sometimes, more by the prospect of adding to his own harmonic palette than by guarding the specifically “Scottish.”

<sup>59</sup> Incidentally, Beethoven told Thomson it was fair that he charged twice the rate Kozeluch had for the settings because: “I consider myself twice as good in this genre as Mr. Kozeluch (*Miserabilis!*)” (cited *ibid.*, 94).

<sup>60</sup> This is also an intriguing example in that the tune as it was sent to Beethoven had already been “tonalized,” with its leading-tone fluctuating between natural and sharp in quick passing motion. (Collected versions of this song sung in the countryside at the turn of the twentieth century used only the flattened seventh degree. See Patrick Schuldhham-Shaw and Emily Lyle, *The Grieg-Duncan Folk-song Collection* [Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1981], 343–4.) It is almost as though Beethoven sought deliberately to override the “modernized” aspect of the tune and bring out its most foreign and “wild” qualities with his setting here, since he effectively makes the raising of the leading-tone irrelevant to the melody. (Note also that in the later German published versions the whole setting is transposed up a step so the setting is in D major, while the tune seems centered on E.) See also Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 152.

## Organic “art music” and individual original genius

Example 9: Beethoven, arr., “Come Fill, Fill My Good Fellow,” from Thomson, *Melodies of Scotland* (c. 1838 edn), 5: 213.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Come fill, fill my good fellow" by Beethoven, arranged by Thomson. The score is in 9/8 time, key of B-flat major, and marked "Allegro con Spirito". It features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Come fill fill my good fellow Fill high high my good fellow And let's be merry and mellow And let us have one bottle more When warm the heart is flowing And". The score includes dynamic markings such as "cres" (crescendo) and "f" (forte).

Meanwhile, while the symphony in the ancient modes never materialized as such, Beethoven did write one more symphony, and it was still inspired by the folk ideal. With its introduction of the human voice to set Schiller's "Ode to Joy" in the finale, the Ninth became Beethoven's most famous example of non-quotational, "internalized" folk-like writing. Besides the fact that the melody is obviously square-phrased, repetitive and diatonic, most of the cues to the fact that it specifically represents the *Volk* collective here must come from the words (with their call for universal brotherhood among all men) and the variation aspects of the melodic unfolding. And yet this piece is the one that ultimately came to represent for many of Beethoven's champions his greatest achievement in synthesizing himself with the folk – and hence his greatest achievement in general.

### A tale of two receptions, Part 1: the problem of originality

To understand this we must turn to the question of originality. Since the term "genius" had come to deal primarily with the process of creation, the reconciliation and absorption of the genius concept into the Romantic notion of "art music" signaled a new fixation on origins and originality in art (related of course to the rejection of rules and conventions as mimetic constants). With this attention to origins, *Werktreue* (authenticity to an original work) became as important in art music as it was for champions of national music as "tradition" – though of course in art music, where the "work" represented the culmination of a synthetic, individual

# The invention of "folk music" and "art music"

Example 10: Beethoven, arr., "Highland Harry," from Thomson, *Melodies of Scotland*, vol. 6 (1841), 271.

*O for him back again*

The Sym<sup>y</sup> & Acc<sup>o</sup> by Beethoven. — The Song by Burns.

*Allegretto con moto*

Harry was a gal-lant gay, Fur state-ly strode he on the plain, But now he's ban-ish'd  
 far a-way, I'll ne-ver see him back a-gain, O for him back a--gain,  
 O for him back a gain I wou'd gie a Knock-hass-ple's land For Loy-al Hur-ry  
 back a gain.

*2d*

When a the lave gae to their bed O for him back again,  
 I wander dowie up the glen; O for him back again!  
 I sit me down and greet my fill. Kind Fortune ease a breaking heart  
 And aye I wish him back again. And send my laddie back again.



creative process, it was a single text rather than a set of variants.<sup>61</sup> (Beethoven's idolater Schindler would soon be demanding "authenticity," in this new sense, in the performance of Beethoven's works.) The obsession with originality means that ever since art music was conceived as such, the distinctions between Bartók's three artistic approaches to folk material have always been value-loaded. The strikingly different reception histories of Beethoven's folk-quotational and folk-internalizing works show this clearly.

Beethoven's settings for Thomson – having been conceived more than Haydn's Scottish song-settings or those of other earlier composers as organic artwork that built upon and used the folk collective as raw material – were also initially received this way. When Beethoven's Scottish songs were first printed in Germany in 1822 (twenty-five settings published by Schlesinger as Op. 108), they garnered considerable critical enthusiasm. The *Zeitung für Theater und Musik* began its review by celebrating the "wonderful gift" that Beethoven had given his "many admirers and friends" with these songs, "all the more priceless because there were formerly so few song compositions by the great master," full of "true romantic spirit" (347).<sup>62</sup> The *Berliner amZ* review, signed "v. d. O.r" (probably Carl Loewe,<sup>63</sup> who himself wrote many ballads, and later "Schottische Bilder" for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 112, 1850), began by calling the collection little "pearls" in Beethoven's diadem, and lost no time in stating that Beethoven, as in other places, did not here condescend to the taste of the "Pöbel." In these songs there

<sup>61</sup> Note that in art music, "authenticity" and oral "tradition" have often come to be opposites – with non-written "tradition" seen more in the light that Protestants saw Catholic "tradition" during the Reformation, that is as residue layered onto the "authentic" written original work. As Richard Taruskin has argued, in various contexts (notably the "early music" movement in the later twentieth century), those seeking "authenticity" have tried to peel off "dirty" oral traditions and resort to the written "work" (often the score) as the source of that authority. Many art-musicians' suspicion toward tradition manifested itself in a rejection of performance history. (Taruskin, "Tradition and Authority," repr. in *Text and Act*, 173–97.) Meanwhile, written "tradition" in art music, since Beethoven at least, has been a concept invoked with the usual intention of reconnecting to a past and establishing the acceptable limits of personal innovation.

<sup>62</sup> Many reviews from German periodicals are nicely collected in Stefan Kunze, ed., *Ludwig van Beethoven: Die Werke im Spiegel seiner Zeit: Gesammelte Konzertberichte und Rezensionen bis 1830* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1987). In the next three paragraphs, parenthetical citations refer to this collection of reviews; translations are mine.

<sup>63</sup> See *BamZ* 1 (1824), 162. Kunze guesses the review is by Marx (*Beethoven* 349). Arno Forchert, however, believes the reviews signed "v. d. O.r" were by Loewe (see "Adolf Bernhard Marx und seine *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*" in *Studien zur Musikgeschichte Berlins im frühen 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Carl Dahlhaus [Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1980], 385n.). On the reviews signed this way, see also Robin Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions during the Composer's Lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 60–1; Wallace does not identify the reviewer.

were no melodic or cadential commonplaces of the type heard ad nauseam, no overwrought pining, no word-painting; instead the Lieder are created "purely from the eternal fount [*Born*] of his original genius." "Here is nature," the review says, and only that pure joy that moves the human heart for love of nature. Loewe continues that Beethoven's collection recalls the noble simplicity of songs by Schulz, Reichardt, and Zelter – turning away from fashion. He also notes that "this is what the Lied must be," as Goethe has taught us (349). A. B. Marx had undoubtedly influenced the opinions written in his journal,<sup>64</sup> but he also wrote his own signed review three years later (1827) in *Cäcilia*.<sup>65</sup> Here the critic effuses that there are some works for which a public must first become ready (*heranreifen*), though before Beethoven's publication of this set, no one would have said this about a collection of Lieder (356). This short notice recapitulates some of the general sentiments of Loewe's *BamZ* review, and then recommends the collection as a treasure trove to the study of any disciples and friends of song and song-composition.<sup>66</sup> In short, the songs represented both simple untouched nature and Beethoven's distillation of this into his own individual genius.

It is telling that in all these reviews the reviewers seem to have no idea that they are discussing songs for which Beethoven did not himself write the melodies. The *ZTM* reviewer does suggest that they no doubt owe some of their uncommon modulations and rhythms to Scotland, being composed on English-language folk *texts* – but still speaks of "these truly new invented [*erfundenen*] melodies, which recall Haydn's splendid Scottish Lieder" (347).<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Loewe speaks of the melodies throughout as creations of Beethoven's original genius, and in

<sup>64</sup> See Forchert, "Adolf Bernhard Marx," 384–5. Marx later took credit for making the Beethoven settings known through his journal as well (see Marx, *Beethoven*, 2: 24–5n.).

<sup>65</sup> See *Cäcilia* 7 (1828), 107.

<sup>66</sup> Another review of recent Lieder collections in the *BamZ*, this one signed "Bust'd'Or" (see *BamZ* 4 [1827], 65–7), also recapitulates the ideas of the 1824 review, this time going on at length about how Schulz's and Reichardt's original ideals of giving Lieder the simple qualities of folk song have degenerated in recent times into trite cadences, lack of regard for the words, and general monotony. Beethoven stands among those who have worked against this, and students and friends of the arts cannot return too often to his collection of Scottish songs, which is unequaled in wealth, depth, *Innigkeit*, diversity of character, and charm (Kunze, *Beethoven*, 355). The reviewer also recommends Weber's songs, some of which earn praise for capturing "den Sinn und Klang des Volksliedes," especially a recent set of "Volkslieder, mit neuen Weisen versehen," Op. 64. (See *BamZ* 4 [1827] 65–6; omitted from Kunze.) Interestingly, the review does not mention Weber's *Scottish* work (his own settings for Thomson were published also in Germany in 1826 by Probst; see McCue, "Weber's Ten Scottish Folksongs," *Weber-Studien* 1 [1993], 163–72).

<sup>67</sup> Thus the later references to some of the songs as being "ein höchst munteres ächt-nationales Lied" or "das echt-hochländische Trinklied" must refer to the words only, or more likely to the *character* of the songs being "echt," since "Die Hochlands Wache / The Highland Watch" is similarly referred to as pronouncing (*aussprechen*) the



several cases he singles out melodic elements for praise or comment: for instance, “o köstlicher Zeit / O Sweet were the hours” reminds him of the Pastoral Symphony, and he wonders if this melodic similarity is intentional (350).<sup>68</sup> Yet another reviewer, writing in the *AmZ* in 1828, believes these songs make one acquainted with Beethoven’s inner essence (*Wesen*) – and goes so far as to specify that one should not seek in the songs melodies related to the ancient Scottish Highland airs. No ancient bard appears here from the mist; it is rather Beethoven’s own spirit (*Geist*), which dreams up a fantasyland and calls it Scotland (356–7).<sup>69</sup> Only the *AmZ*’s own earlier review, from 1825, considered that Beethoven might not be the author of the melodies. The reviewer here began by noting that the title page of the collection was ambiguous, stating as it did that the “Scottish” songs are “composed” by Beethoven. Did this mean the composer had set Scottish texts to his own melodies, or that he had harmonized preexisting melodies, as they were in the “mouth of the folk” (353)? The writer suggests that it was up to everyone to guess for himself, but being familiar with Haydn’s settings of preexistent melodies, this reviewer guessed right.

Immediately from this review we can see the change in tone that such a recognition prompted. Not that the review is negative. On the contrary, it notes that the harmonic setting, “like everything that this master writes,” is full of his own deeply felt emotion and essence. The opening and closing ritornellos are singled out as remarkable, far more interesting than anything Haydn did with his settings (354). On the other hand, the melodies themselves are not treated with the same esteem. According to the reviewer, they are, like the *Volkslieder* of every nation, “related to each other, but nevertheless a true treasure trove” for anyone who finds sense (*Sinn*) where there is sense, “even when it is expressed in ways [*Wendungen*] that are different from those which are currently passable among us” (354). This is a sort of praise, but if nothing else the implication that the melodies all sound alike definitely adds a backhanded spin, not present in the other reviews. The creeping depreciation of the settings became a trend. Writing in 1831, G. W. Fink

bold warlike spirit of the Highlanders “in echt-nordischer Volksmelodie” (Kunze, *Beethoven*, 348).

<sup>68</sup> In this review, there is again one case in which the reviewer speaks of “real folk melody,” apparently referring only to the capturing of a “real” feeling (see n. 67). As in the other review it is the “Highland Watch” that is singled out: “Die Melodie ist in der That eine alte prächtige Barden-Weise, kühn und fest, wie die Felsen der Schotten” (Kunze, *Beethoven*, 351). Not realizing that Thomson had published the songs in Britain, nor knowing anything about the commission behind the work, this reviewer also suggests that the collection should be welcome in England [*sic*], since the melodies are composed to English texts and all more or less have a “Scottish character” (Kunze, *Beethoven*, 352).

<sup>69</sup> The “Highland Watch,” however, is once again singled out as being most characteristic of an old Scottish melody.

strove to clear up the confusion once and for all, mocking earlier reviewers – especially Marx’s signed review in *Cäcilia* – for their misapprehensions, and explaining the history of Thomson’s commissions to his German readers.<sup>70</sup> As for Beethoven’s settings, Fink believed they deserved praise, and wished them luck, but he noted that they had no historical value, since the melodies had been altered from their old, authentic state, and, moreover, dressing them in “modern” harmony was itself anachronistic.<sup>71</sup>

In these two examples of somehow faint praise for the “settings” – once they were recognized as such – we see two different ways in which their reception has suffered ever since the 1830s. Barry Cooper’s recent spirited defense of Beethoven’s song-settings considers their reception in twentieth-century scholarship (in which they have been largely ignored, or in a few cases treated as “pot-boilers” written for money to fund Beethoven’s “serious” composition). He concludes that because “Beethoven’s folksong settings consist of a blending of two very different traditions, folksong and the classical style,” they have not been easy to stomach for

traditionalists on both sides... Those who are familiar with the folksongs in unaccompanied form tend to regard Beethoven’s settings as an unwarranted intrusion that is incompatible with what they regard as the true spirit of the melodies. Meanwhile the Beethoven authorities tend to imply that his folksong settings are an inferior genre, beneath his dignity, distracting him from more important compositions.<sup>72</sup>

While Cooper in no way examines critically the concepts of folk music and art music themselves,<sup>73</sup> his observation captures the power these categories have exerted, and summarizes perfectly the problems the Beethoven settings have faced. The early *AmZ* review and Fink’s evaluation of the settings show these two sides at work already in the 1820s and 1830s – with the *AmZ* exemplifying the “Beethoven authority” and Fink the “folk song purist.” (Fink was exceptional in Germany for his in-depth study of Scottish music as folk “tradition”; in Scotland, criticisms such as Fink’s were the norm, along the lines discussed in Chapter 5. The “tradition” camp has always assailed Beethoven for missing the mark and failing to feel the Scottish quality of the originals.) What concerns me now is the criticism from the aestheticizing camp – Cooper’s “Beethoven

<sup>70</sup> Fink, *Erste Wanderung*, 97–9. <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 97, 101.

<sup>72</sup> Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 196.

<sup>73</sup> And Cooper’s own critical defense of the settings comes very much from within the established art music tradition, which tends to calibrate itself on Beethoven’s personal aesthetics as a benchmark: Cooper speaks of how Beethoven, as Bach did in his chorale settings, “transcended the [monophonic] tradition with some masterful compositions” (*Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 199); his settings are on “a different plane” to those of his predecessors (*ibid.*, 124).

authorities” – which was the main trend in reception of the settings in Germany and other countries ever since it became clear that the melodies were not by Beethoven.

Thomson himself has come under censure in Germany for having had the audacity to make constant demands for simplicity on Beethoven and occasionally to make changes in Beethoven’s “works” without consultation – in other words, for not respecting Beethoven’s organic genius.<sup>74</sup> But criticism extended to Beethoven too, because somehow basing an entire composition too closely on a preexisting tune was problematic in and of itself – signaling a dearth of the personal genius that the initial reviewers had found in the works when they believed Beethoven had written the melodies. If for the “folk song purists,” Beethoven’s settings breached the “authenticity” of tradition, for the arbiters of great art, Beethoven’s dependence on folk melodies, and the restrictions they put on him, breached his own original “authenticity.”

Here the specific connotations of genius in late eighteenth-century musical writing become quite relevant. As long as studied composition had been framed as a craft (artifice/science), it was usually contrapuntal technique (and, later, dramatic sense and harmony as well) that made a composer’s reputation. Even at those times during the Renaissance when the composer and work were held in highest esteem before the Romantic period, the focus was on contrapuntal skill and text-setting rather than melodic originality; and these values held through the early eighteenth century. When, in the generation of Rousseau and the Ossian publications, “original genius” became a central theme in discussing music – as the opposite of art(ifice) – genius (as nature) had been mapped onto melody and artifice had been mapped onto harmony and counterpoint. As we have seen, much of Rousseau’s own writing amounted to a polemic against harmony and counterpoint, while plugging melody as the primary musical representation of nature and genius. Similarly, for Gregory in the 1760s, “musical Genius consists in the invention of Melody,” while issues such as harmonization are reduced to the implicitly lower domain of “judgment.”<sup>75</sup>

On the surface, this cult of melody seemed to be dying out as the synthetic idea of art spread in Germany – in part because the German pride in their art music was framed as a riposte to the reign of melody in Italy. In the early nineteenth century, A. B. Marx himself was influential in spreading the idea of the synthetic, holistic artwork, of which melody was only a part. (Indeed, Marx’s famous feud with G. W. Fink over how

<sup>74</sup> For an early example of this criticism in Germany, and a response to it, see A. W. Thayer’s letter to *The Musical World* 39 (1861), 744–6.

<sup>75</sup> Gregory, *Comparative State*, 2nd edn (1766), 105.

music ought to be taught boiled down to Marx’s claim that elements of composition could not be taught as individual crafts, but that the young artist had to practice from the beginning, even in exercises, creating artworks that were organic wholes.<sup>76</sup> Thus, in championing Beethoven as the supreme art-composer, Marx downplayed any single aspect of his craft, including melodic invention – upholding the composer instead as a great German genius because of his creation of organic wholes, primarily through thematic development. When, in the 1859 Beethoven biography, Marx focused specifically on the question of Beethoven’s themes, he concluded that the composer’s “characteristic” pieces are each clearly delineated not because of their individual melodies, which often have a general – even common – character, but because of a deeper, psychological *Grundidee*.<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile, Wagner went so far as to partially reverse the old chestnut of melody as the natural basis of music: writing in 1850–1, he presented melody as the “first real shape” of music, but he saw it now as an organic outgrowth of the “shaping organs”: harmony and rhythm.<sup>78</sup>

So why was the reputation of Beethoven’s Op. 108 tethered so closely to the question of whether or not he had written the melodies himself? Though the cult of melody *alone* was generally rejected in a synthetic Romantic conception of musical genius, melody nevertheless remained a litmus test of originality. By its very synthetic character, Romantic art took on board the values of its subcomponents – including the association of melody with nature and genius. Melody was among the primary “material for art,” to paraphrase Herder. Thus, for example, despite warning young musicians in a maxim attached to his *Album für die Jugend* that “[m]elody” is the amateur’s [*Dilettanten*] war cry,” Schumann does not actually erase the importance of melody: he continues that “certainly music without melody is not music.” It is a matter of what is meant by melody: according to Schumann, amateurs mean by melody “anything easily, rhythmically pleasing” – whereas true melody is a deeper thing, one that can be recognized in Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, but not in new Italian opera melodies.<sup>79</sup> The Scottish composer George Farquhar Graham, writing in the 1830s, still propounded Beethoven’s genius partly on melodic grounds (Beethoven was a “man of first-rate musical genius, and therefore by nature a great melodist”; even pedantic lessons

<sup>76</sup> See Kurt-Erich Eicke, “Das Problem des Historismus im Streit zwischen Marx und Fink,” in *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*, ed. Walter Wiora (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1969), 221–32.

<sup>77</sup> Marx, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Leben und Schaffen* (Berlin: A. O. Janke, 1859), 2: 21.

<sup>78</sup> *Opera and Drama, Richard Wagner’s Prose Works 2*, trans. William Ashlon Ellis (London: Kegan Paul and Co., 1892–9), 104.

<sup>79</sup> Robert Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, ed. Konrad Wolff, trans. Paul Rosenfeld (New York: Pantheon, 1946), 36.

in counterpoint “could not extinguish his passionate feeling for melody.”<sup>80</sup>) These views complete a trajectory of changing emphasis in praising music, a trajectory which can be (over)simplified as a move from emphasis on craft (counterpoint, dramatic conception etc.) pre-1750, to stressing melodic creation as genius in the later eighteenth century, to stressing organic working-out as genius in German Romantic ideologies – but with this last value-system incorporating a lingering regard for melody, which was sometimes tacit and sometimes stated. Additionally, since the lasting attachment to melody was now bound to the new criterion of originality as a component of individual genius – the result was a prejudice for melodic originality.

Marx himself, who had been so effusive about Beethoven’s Op. 108 settings when they appeared in the 1820s, took an interesting tack after being put straight rather rudely by Fink about the origins of the tunes. In his educational books on musical composition from the 1840s, learning to set “folk” melodies plays a huge part<sup>81</sup> (and Beethoven’s Scottish songs are singled out for praise as the highest achievement in this genre<sup>82</sup>); but in the end he treats such settings as a pedagogical step – the ostensible end-goal being the creation of fully “original” works. By his 1859 biography of Beethoven, Marx discusses the composer’s Scottish settings specifically in the context of originality, explaining that Beethoven’s “originality” lay in his “constant fidelity to himself and his object”; and because he is true to himself, he is *even* original when he uses preexisting melodies and *makes them his own*.<sup>83</sup> The Scottish Lieder (alongside the soldier’s march from the “Eroica”, supposedly “taken from the mouth of the folk”) receive special praise – for Marx still considers Op. 108 the “richest and most artistic [*künstlerisch Gehaltsvollste*] collection of Lieder we have” – but his entire praise is grounded in the fact that Beethoven takes the “old Gaelic *Urmelodie*, based on the Oriental pentatonic scale” and on speech rhythms, and reorganizes them, giving them such a rich accompaniment that “for this alone they must be called an artwork.”<sup>84</sup> He had to justify Beethoven’s use of preexisting melodies partly by exaggerating Beethoven’s changes to the melodies, and partly by considering them as a special case.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Graham, *Essay on the Theory and Practice of Musical Composition*, 4.

<sup>81</sup> See Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition: praktisch theoretisch*, 2nd edn (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1841–7), book 2, section 3 (1: 341–94).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 342–3 <sup>83</sup> Marx, *Beethoven*, 2: 22–3.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 23–4. Marx had already written in his *Lehre* that a composer could either set folk melodies in a way that approximates the folk themselves – serving the melody – or he could strive for a “higher end” with his work, raising the melody and its effect to a “higher sphere,” and thus turning the setting into a “work of art” rather than a folk song as such (*Lehre*, 1: 342).

<sup>85</sup> Hermann Deiters, in his German expansion of Thayer’s biography, echoed Marx in some respects, noting that Beethoven did put a lot of work into the settings, and

So it was a question of the scale and method of use: a truly major artwork might use bits of preexisting folk melody in direct quotation – this might even be encouraged as a way of synthesizing folk universality – but such bits needed to be overshadowed by the artistic whole. (Marx himself judged whether a preexisting tune was justified in a work by whether it was mandated from *within* the work.<sup>86</sup>) By this point in the mid-nineteenth century, writers such as Wilhelm Riehl could praise Beethoven (and Mozart and Haydn and others) as great geniuses despite suggesting – or perhaps because they suggest – that many or even most of their melodies were based on folk tunes;<sup>87</sup> and such claims have persisted ever since, going to the heart of the most beloved works in the first Viennese school, especially in works that specifically invoke “nature.” Tracing the main theme of Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony to a Croatian folk song, Bartók would assert that it was “usual at the time” for composers to find their themes among the folk and use them unacknowledged.<sup>88</sup> Since, according to Bartók, “real folk music can be regarded as a natural phenomenon from the point of view of higher art music,” then such folk music “is to the composer what Nature herself is to the writer”; or it “plays the part in composition that natural objects play in painting.”<sup>89</sup> This was nothing but a restatement of the ideal of Herderian synthesis, a concrete method for turning folk artifacts from “tradition” into material for aesthetic art. But note that in this process all of the agency – all of the authority over “authenticity” – now lies with the individual artist.

The first Viennese school, as the ultimate locus of the “Classical” in classical art music, continued to be the most carefully linked to the organic folk in studies. In the 1880s, Franjo Kuhač traced many Haydn themes to Croatian folk songs, and it became a kind of hobby among

stressing the resultant originality: “Es sind durchweg ganz selbständige, echt Beethovensche Gebilde, man vergißt mitunter ganz, daß die zu grunde liegenden Melodien nicht von ihm sind; er lebt ganz in ihnen, die Mittel, sie zu höherer Bedeutung zu heben, konnte nur Beethoven so erfinden und beherrschen” (Thayer/Deiters, *Ludwig van Beethovens Leben* [Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1907], 4: 132).

<sup>86</sup> Consider his comparison of the “themes Russes” in the Op. 59 string quartets with other cases in which Beethoven used preexisting melodies. Because the Russian melodies seem implanted artificially in the quartets, Marx finds that they work less well in the organic whole than preexisting melodies in other examples he cites, in which Beethoven seems to have picked the borrowed melodies himself, such as the “Eroica” Symphony, the Op. 110 Sonata, and *Wellington’s Victory* (Marx, *Beethoven*, 2: 42–3).

<sup>87</sup> See for example Wilhelm Riehl, “Das Volkslied in seinem Einfluß auf der gesammte Entwicklung der modernen Musik,” *Die Gegenwart* 3 (1849), 667–86, esp. 667.

<sup>88</sup> Bartók, *Essays*, 328 (in “The Relation of Folk Music to the Development of the Art Music of Our Time,” 1921). The *Hirtengesang* in the last movement of the symphony has also been traced to a preexisting melody, an alpine *Ranz des vaches*. See Alexander Hyatt-King, “Mountains, Music and Musicians,” *Musical Quarterly* 31 (1945), 401–3.

<sup>89</sup> Bartók, *Essays*, 324.



a certain group of twentieth-century folk-art aestheticians to trace themes from the Viennese classical composers to existing “folk” melodies.<sup>90</sup> It is ultimately unsurprising to find writers tracing to folk sources melodies much less directly linked to the idea of “nature” than those in the Pastoral Symphony, such as the second theme of the first movement of Beethoven’s Violin Concerto, the finale of the Seventh Symphony, or the trio in the second movement of the Ninth.<sup>91</sup> Charles Rosen locates the 1780s and 1790s as a golden time in which aesthetic art music “was able thoroughly to assimilate and to create elements of folk style at will.”<sup>92</sup> As Gramit notes, Rosen’s approach echoes a long line of thought: by the time Rosen was writing in the late twentieth century, he could take much of the underlying rhetoric as received knowledge to build on. The power of this rhetoric lies in the claim that the “autonomy” of the Classical style at the end of the eighteenth century – held up as the Golden Age of high art music itself – is specifically based on its “thorough assimilation” of folk elements for the sake of universality within each individual work. (Gramit stresses how persistent the idea has been that “for the *cultivated* musician” the only proper use of folk music is not as an ideal in itself, but as “an object of study” that “the artist will transcend.”<sup>93</sup>) It is unsurprising then that complete settings of preexisting folk melodies crossed an imaginary line when it came to reception, for in these cases individual originality and synthesis appear outweighed by the preexisting material – denying the composer the final level of aesthetic greatness. Most critics did not even try to find ways to continue to praise Beethoven’s folk song-settings as Marx did; they just ignored them.

### **A tale of two receptions, Part 2: composing “as the folk”**

Furthermore, given the history of equating melody and genius, we might expect, despite all the praise for composers who were able to assimilate folk snatches into their own works thoroughly, that *even* when quotation was limited to a pregnant theme, and/or justified in terms of its integration into an artistic whole, it would remain somehow just one small step short of the true ideal of Romantic artistic originality.

<sup>90</sup> For analysis in English of Haydn’s last two symphonies, integrating Kuhač’s tracings, see H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976–80), 3: 597–618; and for more on Haydn and folk song, 4: 271–83.

<sup>91</sup> See Hartmut Braun, “Beethoven und das Volkslied,” *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* 27/8 (1982–3) 285–91; Hohenemser, “Beethoven als Bearbeiter,” 37–9, etc.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, expanded edn (New York and London: Norton, 1997), 330.

<sup>93</sup> Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, 86.



This turns out to be true: critics since Beethoven’s time, for all their melodic tracing and grounding of beloved art-musical works in folk themes, have reserved the ultimate aesthetic praise for works in which both quotation and direct imitation are eschewed – or sublimated to an untraceable level. This holds even for the critics most concerned with the aesthetic use of folk melodies. In his textbook chapter on setting folk melodies, Marx actually postulates that the composer should ultimately not “imitate folk songs (that would be vain) nor occasionally bring one forth in his own works (that would be trivial [*gering*])” but instead use them to “penetrate more profoundly into the soul of his art.”<sup>94</sup> Despite his claims that it did not matter if a melody was preexistent if it was well used, Marx ultimately frames the ideal as neither quotation (even small bits) nor direct imitation – but rather complete organic absorption.

We can see the same disparity a century later between what Bartók claims and the tacit values underneath. At the moment Bartók presents the three methods for incorporating “folk” elements, he asserts that if the composer has absorbed the sound of the music, there is no difference between the first and second methods – between quoting and imitating.<sup>95</sup> He refutes the idea held by “many people” that work with preexisting themes is easier because it relieves the composer of “part of the work: the invention of themes” (345); he counters that the individual composer’s central contribution lies not in the moment of inventing melody, but in the organic use of that melody. Despite his love for tracing themes to “real” folk sources, whether in Beethoven or Stravinsky, there is however something disingenuous in Bartók’s claims that it does not matter whether a composer invents his own themes or takes them over. When he first lays out his three approaches to folk music melody, he asks: “What is the best way for a composer to reap the full benefits of his studies in peasant music? It is to assimilate the idiom of peasant music so completely that he is able to forget all about it and use it as his mother tongue” (341). But this is the same language he uses when referring directly to his third method (344). Though he railed against the “romantic conception which values originality above all” (346), Bartók too seemed guided by these values. He sounds just like Marx when he speaks of the “creative power of an individual genius” (322, or see 347), and it was ultimately through his own individual, “original” output that he sought, and received, a place in the canon. In another essay, written in 1941, ten years after he first laid out his three methods, Bartók wrote: “Of course, we have [also] used a lot of [preexisting] peasant tunes. However in my own original

<sup>94</sup> Marx, *Lehre*, 1: 342.

<sup>95</sup> Bartók, *Essays*, 343. Parenthetical references in the remainder of this paragraph refer to this book.

works they have never been used . . . if there is no indication of origin [in the title, etc.], then there have been no folk melodies used at all. These are my original works” (348–9). He adds, most tellingly, that his “original works outnumber my transcriptions and have, I trust, a greater importance” (350). So much for the assertion that it did not matter where thematic material came from! Bartók’s writing is an example just how embedded the German Romantic ideals of art had become in international discourse by the twentieth century. Whether for Marx in 1859 or Bartók in the 1930s and 1940s, the music that stood at the very pinnacle was music that had sucked up the folk and completely distilled it through the individual genius – applying the collective “mother tongue” toward individual utterance.

It was Wagner, already in 1850–1, who had put this ideal in the starkest terms, arguing that opera composers had failed to absorb folk-melodic universality into art music when they simply imitated folk melody, because they could not invent it organically from within, “as the folk.”<sup>96</sup> If folk melodies and their derived forms were grafted externally into a work, the composition would fall through. Even composing “as the folk” was clearly for Wagner a limited aesthetic goal – unless such creation could somehow take on artistic properties. Predictably, the piece in which Wagner found this ideal fulfilled was the one he made central in carving out his own place in art music: Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Wagner holds up Beethoven’s finale as the solution, as salvation even, treating the “Ode to Joy” as the high-point of all music history before himself not only because of its introduction of poetry into the symphonic genre, but because this rediscovery of the poetic “begetting” of music is framed as the way to internalize and absorb a folk-collective universality into art music. Wagner rhapsodizes: “To become a *human being*, Beethoven perforce must become *an entire*, i.e. a social [*gemeinsamer*] being” creating music from the word, just as the folk did. Thus “With this [*Freude*] Melody is solved withal the mystery of Music: we *know* now, we have won the faculty to be *with consciousness* organically working artists.”<sup>97</sup> In Wagner’s narrative, it is certainly not the Scottish song-settings, and not even a piece such as the Pastoral Symphony, but rather the Ninth Symphony that represents Beethoven’s culminating art-musical approach to folk music – and therefore the apotheosis of this synthesis in all music up to the present. Beethoven could compose “as the folk” and simultaneously as an artist.

<sup>96</sup> “im Grunde selbst Volk sein müssen” (Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* [Leipzig: E. W. Fritzsch, 1872], 329, see also 385); *Opera and Drama*, 58, 107.

<sup>97</sup> *Opera and Drama*, 107, italics in source (in original: “wir wissen nun, und haben die Fähigkeit gewonnen, mit Bewußtsein organisch schaffende Künstler zu sein,” *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3: 385.)

Marx himself ended up dwelling on the same piece, and without Wagner's linked argument about poetry as the begetting agent. Despite his initial enthusiasm for and continuing defense of Beethoven's Scottish settings, in his biography Marx gives them much less space than he devotes to the finale of the Ninth Symphony. For Marx, too, the *Freude* melody of the Ninth represents the ultimate organic absorption of folk music, as "mother tongue" spoken by the artist with maximum originality. Marx draws attention first to the fact that the *Freude* theme is "im Volkston" and then, in his description of how Beethoven as an artistic spirit (*Künstlergeist*) introduces and handles the melody, he switches to calling the melody a "folk melody" (*Volksweise*).<sup>98</sup> Dahlhaus has implied that Marx considered anything a folk song that "live[d] among the folk" and became "its property";<sup>99</sup> but this underplays the fact that Marx placed very stringent restrictions on what he considered a folk song, carefully pointing out that not any theme intended in the *Volkston* was genuine.<sup>100</sup> Far from it; what apparently made Beethoven's theme a *Volkslied*, despite its creation by an individual modern composer, was that that composer had become an organic part of the *Volk*, while at the same time maintaining his individual voice. Thus Marx could draw a direct link between the "truth" of folk melody and the "truth" of Beethoven's originality, and consider the greatest art music that which channeled this genuine folk feeling. Even for Marx, Beethoven's folk song-settings ended up paling next to the Ninth.

Just as the final and lasting myth of origin for folk music involved a simultaneous obsession with and mystification of the original sources, so it was with art music. Marx, Bartók, and Rosen all claimed that it was ultimately impossible to tell when the composers of the first Viennese school took their melodies from the folk and when they invented their own in the same vein. However, as long as they could compose "as the folk" (to paraphrase Wagner), there was actually no difference; this was the criterion for authenticity.<sup>101</sup> The idea of quotation sinks to a level so

<sup>98</sup> "[E]s ist wahrhaft weisheitvolle Intuition eines Künstlergeistes, dem höchsten Aufschwung der Phantasie, den mächtigsten und zartesten Empfindungen diese unschuldvoll einfältige Volksweise gegenüberzustellen. Sie sagt Alles! bestätigt Alles, was wir zuvor zu enträthseln und zu deuten gewagt, mit der Unwidersprechlichkeit des Kinderglaubens" (Marx, *Beethoven*, 2: 285).

<sup>99</sup> See Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 109 (*Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* [Wiesbaden: Atheniaon, 1980], 90), which is a paraphrase, a bit out of context (and with no bibliographical citation), of Marx, *Lehre*, 1: 341.

<sup>100</sup> Marx in fact implies that most folk songs did originate in the folk – although, typically for his time, he fudges the question of earliest origin despite its importance to him (*Lehre*, 1: 341). A fairer treatment of Marx's views on folk song than Dahlhaus's can be found in von Pulikowski, *Begriffes Volkslied*, 85–7, 375, 415–16, 425.

<sup>101</sup> Marx's and Bartók's claims are discussed above. Rosen's claim echoes Bartók's almost word for word: because Haydn had thoroughly assimilated the folk style and

deep that the boundaries between the folk authenticity and the artist’s individual authenticity dissolve, leaving only the “authenticity” itself. As time went on, the more any work was held up by German art ideals the fewer or less explicitly established were actual quotations from the folk. Despite the constant trickle of writers tracing instrumental themes of the first Viennese school composers to preexisting folk songs, most scholarship has tacitly accepted that these composers did not build their most important themes from fully existent melodies, but by applying collective – and hence “universal” – syntactic elements to self-contained logic.<sup>102</sup> Walter Wiora, in his study of *Europäische Volksmusik und abendländische Tonkunst*, finds several themes from the Beethoven symphonies, including the funeral march from the “Eroica” and the theme of the last movement of the Fifth Symphony, to be based on old “folk” “melodic types”; but note the word “type” here: with regard to the “Eroica,” Wiora claims that Beethoven cannot be said to have “borrowed a specific folk melody” but rather “individualized” a model with universal validity toward his ends.<sup>103</sup> Only those composers (and those pieces) which apparently demonstrate the highest degree of “individual” agency – while also building on the most “universal” foundation – have been accorded the highest status. Beethoven, as the most consciously “sentimental” latecomer in the first Viennese school, has been the highest of the high – and his Ninth Symphony has embodied this paradigm perfectly.<sup>104</sup>

Those who credit Herder for inventing the concept of “folk music” – generally for the wrong reasons – also tend to praise him for championing it; but they might in fact be better off seeing him as the enemy; for though Herder did not invent the idea of primitive, national music that was morally superior to “mannered” modern music, he did begin the process of subverting that natural music to a synthetic idea of art.

turned it into something aesthetic “it makes not the slightest difference whether Haydn invented his folksongs or remembered them” (*Classical Style*, 331); “it was the tune that had to give way” to Haydn’s style rather than vice versa (*ibid.*, 332).

<sup>102</sup> George Marek, for example, considers “the folk songs of his people” among the formative influences on the composer – alongside Bach, Haydn, Mozart, etc. (George R. Marek, *Beethoven: Biography of a Genius* [New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969], 69). For more discussion of musicological claims that the great Viennese composers built on folk song, see Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, 86–92.

<sup>103</sup> Wiora, *Europäische Volksmusik und abendländische Tonkunst*, 111–14; see also 221–6.

<sup>104</sup> Beethoven made his grappling with folk as lost naïveté into a Schillerian struggle. In Wagner’s words, he had to be “with consciousness” an organic artist. (And what better example could Wagner choose here than Beethoven’s monumental setting of Schiller’s own words?) Since Haydn did not engage consciously with the folk as Other, he has frequently been received as delightful naïf where Beethoven is the conscious Romantic genius. Even Rosen, a great champion of Haydn’s ability to compose “as the folk,” frames Beethoven’s composition “as the folk” (again the Ninth Symphony) as a more conscious “triumph” than Haydn’s folk-like style (see *Classical Style*, 332).

However much Herder rhapsodized about *Volkslied*, in his final formulation “folk music” is inherently denied autonomous aesthetic value. Whether or not he saw the full implications of what he was doing, his most influential followers certainly did. They repeated the same gesture with mounting repercussions, leaving the highest (autonomous, aesthetic) category open only to practicing “art” musicians, individual geniuses such as Beethoven who recognized the sentimental, synthetic task they were undertaking. The implications of this critical orientation will be taken up in the [final chapter](#), but for now let us note that since art music established itself as a strong origin-based category, even folkish melody itself needed to be passed through the filter of individual genius – composed originally “as the folk” – if it was to be part of a true masterpiece. As this idea of organic musical high art spread outward from Germany, the German reception tropes that greeted Beethoven’s most “quotational” folkish work at one end, and his most “original-internalizing” folkish work at the other, also spread and entrenched themselves internationally. Nicole Biamonte has noted that even in the newest *New Grove*, Beethoven’s large corpus of folk song settings comes at the very bottom of the works list – even below the spurious works!<sup>105</sup> Meanwhile, the Ninth Symphony has gone on to become the anthem of the European Union, surely one more assertion that it represents both universal folk brotherhood and cultural capital as individual achievement – in this case for a whole continent.

<sup>105</sup> Nicole Biamonte, “Haydn’s and Beethoven’s Duplicate Folksong Settings,” paper given at AMS Seattle in 2004.

## Local nation and universal folk: the legacy of geography in musical categories

The concepts of folk music and art music as interdependent, origin-based musical domains quickly exploded out of the more localized discourses and milieus in which they formed. The new categories would eventually reach the Americas and parts of Asia and Africa, but already by the 1820s they had come to underlie musical thought across Europe. Their spread is clear when we contrast the roles assigned to a simple, symbolic song in each of two wildly successful French operas, separated by a crucial forty years. In André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry's 1784 *Richard Cœur-de-lion*, the plot pivots on a "romance" played by King Richard's friend Blondel in disguise as a blind minstrel – and which turns out to be a composition by King Richard himself. (The imprisoned king is alerted to Blondel's proximity by the tune, and knows he will be rescued.) This chivalric romance may be "old" and "simple," but like the "picturesque" contents of Percy's *Reliques* it belongs to the ancient aristocratic minstrels and kings – the Rizzios and the James Is. (Indeed, *Richard* is very much an old-regime opera; its signature tune "Ô Richard, ô mon roi" became a royalist anthem during the Revolution.<sup>1</sup>) The drama in François Adrien Boieldieu's *La Dame blanche*, which took the Opéra-Comique by storm in the mid-1820s, also hinges on the protagonist's recognition of a song, but the song now represents the new "folk" category. When the hero, Georges Brown, who has lost his memory, recognizes a "Scottish air" that the "chorus of peasants and Highlanders" (*paysans et Montagnards*) is singing, they realize that he is actually the heir to Avenel Castle, which is about to be auctioned off by the evil steward Gaveston. This plot device is not even in the original Walter Scott novel on which the opera was based, but it charmed

<sup>1</sup> See Mason, *Singing the French Revolution*, 46.

audiences and critics alike by capturing the idea of folk music perfectly. Although the portentous melody is basically only a short phrase from the well-known Scottish song “Robin Adair” (Example 11a–b), the idealized peasants claim it as “our melody”;<sup>2</sup> it represents the entire clan/nation, from the peasants to the noble castle heir. (Eugène Scribe’s libretto makes it abundantly clear that the “minstrels” onstage are also part of the organic folk, unlike the independent courtly minstrel in Grétry’s opera.) In short, the song embodies the people – and the concept of tradition – worked into an operatic tableau; and an 1820s public could easily recognize this symbolism. The critic Castil-Blaze’s review of the opera even assumed that another ballad in the opera – for which Boieldieu had actually written his own melody – was a preexisting tune, and complained that that melody should have been left in its older (i.e. “authentic”) idiom.<sup>3</sup> Not only the idea of folk music, but some dilemmas about how best to work it into art music, had clearly spread to France.

Yet it is also no coincidence that folk music here is represented in a Scottish context. Although folk and art music were conceived as domains whose power lay in reaching *universal* humanity by a direct connection to natural genius – and hence the categories were easily internalized in many different nations – this goal was nevertheless framed quite differently in different places. Since art music quickly established itself as the “highest” form of musical culture, while folk music began as a kind of exotic Other, a relationship of center to periphery developed. The centers contained those nations with Europe’s most internationally renowned literate, professional musical institutions – that is, with historically well-established “cultivated” music practices of their own (in the sense discussed in Chapter 3). In France and Italy, for example, cultural nationalists could turn to their “cultivated” national music histories, and use the idea of folk music as a kind of escapist fantasy painted in broad conflated strokes – a patina of the primitive, “Ancient,” and/or “Oriental” – even when filtered through a particular local color. It made sense for French composers to locate the “purest” forms of folk music outside of France – in peripheral, “traditional” nations. It helped all the more if the nation was “peripheral” to Western Europe in a physical sense too, which was why Scotland remained the *locus classicus* of the folk and folk music. *La Dame blanche* is a perfect example.

On the other hand, musical nationalists in the “peripheral” countries were more than happy to internalize the image as themselves as Others.

<sup>2</sup> The peasants proclaim: “Il est sensible à nos accens, des vieux airs de la patrie; il aime à redire les chants!”

<sup>3</sup> He calls the number “une vieille ballade écossaise, dont M. Boieldieu a rajeuni la musique, et qui, à l’exception du final où l’air se marie fort agréablement avec le choeur, auroit peut-être conservé dans son vieux style, des graces beaucoup plus nouvelles” (*Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 12 December 1825, 3).



*Local nation and universal folk*

Example 11a: Boieldieu, *La Dame blanche*, Act 3, from No. 12 (“Chœur et air écossais”).



Example 11b: “Robin Adair” as set by Haydn for George Thomson, *Melodies of Scotland* (1803 edn), 2: 92.

*Oh had I a cave &c<sup>re</sup>*

*Duet*  
*Andante*  
*espressivo*

Musical score for Example 11b. It is a duet for two voices and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Andante' and the expression is 'espressivo'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are 'Oh had I a cave on some wild distant shore where the winds howl to the waves dashing'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note rhythm in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand.

While these countries had historically imported their ideas of cultivated music from French, Italian, or German composers, pieces, performers, and values, now each could assert a unique national identity through its folk music. In these nations, then, folk music as specifically (locally) “national” capital was, since its conception, a ticket to international recognition on a stage dominated by others.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> There is a strong parallel to the literary interaction that Katie Trumpener has traced between (central) England and its (peripheral) Celtic fringe. Although, from the later

Finally, in Germany, the idea of folk music might serve the exotic ends that it did in France and Italy; but since it was the Germans who first conceived their “cultivated” music as “art music” in synthetic, organic terms, folk music could play another role here too. Germans from Herder on suggested that collecting local *Volksmusik* (or the still synonymous *Nationalmusik*) might serve as a natural inspiration or corrective within a national(ist) *cultivated* tradition. From the outset, then, in Germany the “national” in “national music” could be either local-natural or exotic-natural in intent, or both together. This “organic” use of folk music only spread to France and Italy as these countries slowly internalized German ideas of synthetic Romantic art.

As the national in “national music” began to pick up more varied and multivalent meanings, the different possible uses of the spreading folk and art concepts remained mutually influential, but grew apart as well. This chapter considers how the localized origin of the idea of folk music (in discourse on Scottish music, and later other “peripheral” music), and the localized origin of the idea of art music (in discourse within Germany), affected the connotations of the categories as they diffused, and have often lingered on in their supposedly “universal” meanings.

### **Ubiquitous categories: the geographical spread of folk and art music**

Folk revivals spread like wildfire across Europe’s musically “peripheral” nations after the discourse on Scotland established a model. Ireland and Wales followed most quickly, because of their cultural proximity to Scotland and their similar relationship to English dominance. Already by the mid-1780s and 1790s, collections and essays by the Irish and Welsh antiquaries Joseph Walker Cooper, Edward Bunting and Edward Jones began to borrow a good deal of the Ossian-influenced rhetoric we have been tracing in writings on Scottish national music.<sup>5</sup>

eighteenth century, the historical role of the bards came to be important both in England and in the surrounding Celtic nations, Trumpener notes that the bards represented something local and distinct, something national, to the fringe nations, while for the English, who cared little about the individual identities of those nations, the same bardic figures came to represent the general place of the isolated artist, faced with a hostile and changing world (see Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, xi–xv, 6–7). In music, we may substitute Germany for England as the location of the hegemonic center, and for the figure of the bard, we may substitute (or add) the idea of folk music. (I say add because folk music was often closely intertwined with the figure of the bard or minstrel himself – hence the common use or invocation of the harp in music suggesting a distant folk spirit or tone in much Romantic music.)

<sup>5</sup> In 1724 there was already a collection grouping Irish tunes together (John and William Neal, *A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes* [Dublin: printed for the compilers, 1724], though unannotated and without the later “folk” connotations. These more familiar folk conceptions came with Joseph Cooper Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the*

In collections such as that of Nikolay Aleksandrovich Lvov and “Ivan” Prach from 1790, we next see the idea of the folk discovered and internalized in Russia.<sup>6</sup> Russia’s quickness to internalize an idea of folk music is unsurprising given that it was the continental European country most closely linked to the Eastern Other in international image, while also participating vigorously in the Continent’s intellectual culture and exchanges of ideas. The folk-discoveries continued: Switzerland had long been associated with nature, and the renowned *Ranz des vaches* already published in Rousseau’s *Dictionnaire* inspired a wave of folk song and folk-musical collection there by the beginning of the new century.<sup>7</sup> Next the Scandinavians, whose skalds Herder had already considered along with the Scottish bards in his collections of *Volkslied*, found or invented their own national songs and poetry.<sup>8</sup> Finally, by the 1820s and 1830s, almost every country in Europe east of Germany was finding its own folk roots, hand in hand with political and linguistic nationalist movements and revivals.<sup>9</sup>

As the Boieldieu example shows, the fact that France had a strong “cultivated” musical establishment independent from Germany’s meant that French composers took longer than those in most other European nations to dwell on their home-grown “folk” for inspiration and national validation. (And when the French did look to find their indigenous folk, it was initially to their own peripheral Celts, the Bretons.<sup>10</sup>) The same delay occurred – and for the same reasons – in Italy; but after mid-century, even the French and Italians turned inward

*Irish Bards* (London: T. Payne and Son, 1786), and especially the work of Bunting from the 1790s to 1840s, beginning with *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music ... Collected from the Harpers &c* (London: Preston and Son, [c. 1796]). Thomas Moore’s *Selection of Irish Melodies* (London: J. Powers, [1808?–1813?]) furthered this trend. In Wales, Edward Jones’s *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* (London: printed for the author, 1794) was a landmark work in collection; though an interesting predecessor was John Parry and Evan Williams, *Antient British Music; Or, a Collection of Tunes, never before published, which are retained by the Cambro-Britons* (London: Mickleborough, for the compilers, 1742), which before Ossian had claimed for British music a connection to a native druidic, bardic past (again suggesting that the Ossian publications played perfectly into current interests). Typically, however, that earlier collection still showed more interest in establishing national property than in the post-Ossianic idea of folk and tradition.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 3, n. 79.

<sup>7</sup> See *Schweizerkühlreihen: Acht Schweizer-Kuehreihen, mit Musik und Text* (Bern, 1805), expanded as *Sammlung von Schweizer Kühreihen und Alten Volksliedern* (Bern: Burgdorfer, 1812).

<sup>8</sup> One of the first collections was in Sweden, by Erik Gustaf Geijer and Arvid August Afzelius, *Svenska folkvisor* (Stockholm: Strinnholm och Häggström, 1814–17; music published in accompanying volume).

<sup>9</sup> See for example [Jan Rittersberk], *České národní písně* (Prague: Karl Barth, 1825). Polish and Hungarian collections of “people’s songs” (“Pieśni ludu” and “népdal” respectively) began in the early nineteenth century as well.

<sup>10</sup> The first major effort at folk song collection in France was Théodore Hersart de La Villemarqué, *Barzas-Breiz; Chants populaires de la Bretagne, recueillis et publiés avec*

more consistently to see their history in their own musical “folk traditions.”<sup>11</sup> By the last part of the century, multicultural America, too, began to consider what best represented its own folk music. In these places, where “folk music” had already been recognized for some time, but only as a phenomenon in more distant, “primitive” parts of Europe, it finally came home to roost.

As the discovery of local folk-musical traditions spread, so did the German idea of organic art music (and its relationship with that folk music) – it too had reached most of Europe by 1820. Again, the “peripheral” nations were first to compete on German terms, embracing the idea of folk music as a Herderian path to organic, “universal” art music. And again, the last countries to internalize German definitions of individual, synthetic art music were those with the longest histories of indigenous literate professional music that could be seen as cultural capital independent of Germany: France and Italy. In the case of Italy, long-standing operatic traditions continued to dominate; but it is clear that as German and Anglophone discourse began steadily to denigrate Italian opera and its composers for their failure to produce “organic,” composer-centric masterworks using the criteria laid out by the Germans, this rhetoric eventually had some effect on the way music was conceived in Italy itself. Arrigo Boito’s contempt for formal convention and Verdi’s own move toward increasingly central control over his works, his mounting scorn of audience approval as such, his slowing of compositional pace, and his interest in and reactions against Wagner’s prose and music show a coming to terms with aspects of the German hegemony in defining “great art.” Even the French – who in the later nineteenth century mounted the greatest counter-movement to the dominant German conceptions of Romantic, organic art – internalized aspects of the German paradigm they were reacting against. Just at the moment when they were striving hardest to construct an art music that would escape Germanic (and particularly Wagnerian) definition, they were also seeking more direct connections in that art music to “ancient” chant and (now home-grown French) *folk* music. In other words, they were internalizing the idea that their own oldest national musical “traditions” represented an authentic collective purity, and they were seeking to aestheticize that tradition in modern terms. We can see this in

*une traduction française, des éclaircissements, des notes et les mélodies originales* (Paris: Delloye, 1839).

<sup>11</sup> Beyond Breton folk song, interest in French folk music as such snowballed only after Louis Napoleon initiated an official project in 1853 to define and collect folk song. Meanwhile, the earliest Italian studies and collections of indigenous folk song included Vittorio Imbriani, *Dell’organismo poetico e della poesia popolare italiana: sunto delle lezioni dettate ne’ mesi di febbraio e marzo 1866 nella Regia Università Napoletana* (Naples, 1866), and various regional collections such as Antonio Casetti and Vittorio Imbriani, *Canti popolari delle province meridionali* (Rome and Turin: E. Loescher, 1871–2).

the compositional and editorial work of Vincent D'Indy, Charles Bordes, Julien Tiersot and their circle. Ultimately, despite the inevitable variations, the underlying ideas of folk and art music and their relationship conquered European (and American) thought more or less as they were defined at the close of the eighteenth century in Germany.

Since this is an Anglophone study, it is especially worth exploring some examples of how the modern dynamic relationship of art and folk music entered the English language. Although the idea of folk music came from discussions of Scottish music after the 1760s, it took nearly half a century for "national" music's originally firm antithesis in such discussions – artificial "cultivated" music – to give way to the more synthetic German idea of art music in Anglophone writings. In 1816, in a detailed essay on a music festival in Edinburgh, the Scottish musician and composer George Farquhar Graham (1789–1867) complained that although Scotland has some of the best "national" melodies around ("rude, though often expressive melodies . . . excellent in their kind," 2, 7), he would like to see better knowledge of "classical music" there (6, 8, etc.).<sup>12</sup> This is the earliest use of the term "classical music" I can find in English;<sup>13</sup> and Graham uses the term basically interchangeably with other novel monikers: "higher" and "serious music" (for example 7, 169). He contrasts these domains not only to "national music" but also to the "classics" in the older English sense – chiding cultists of both "national music" and of the old-style "classics" for resisting modern trends in the art: "In Scotland, the national melodies, and in England the works of the old English masters, and of Handel . . . occupy the attention of so many lovers of music and professors, that both leisure and inclination are wanting to the study of the beautiful and perfect works of more modern times" (169). (Note that the "classics"-inspired "Concert of Antient Music" still had a policy of playing only music older than twenty years, and would not perform Haydn and Mozart until the late 1820s.<sup>14</sup>) With writers such as Graham, "classical music" had finally moved away from the older Anglophone idea of chronologically bounded "classics," instead importing the German concept of "high," individualized art music.

Perhaps because Graham was a practicing professional "art" composer (albeit independently wealthy enough not to rely too much on the

<sup>12</sup> *An Account of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival, Held Between the 30th October and 5th November, 1815: To which is added An Essay, Containing Some General Observations on Music* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1816). Parenthetical citations in the next three paragraphs refer to this work.

<sup>13</sup> William Weber points to the period around 1820 as the time at which the actual combination "classical music" entered the language; and Graham's use of the term predates any given by Weber (see *Musical Classics*, 194–5, 204).

<sup>14</sup> Weber, *Musical Classics*, 169–72.

market)<sup>15</sup> who happened to come from the country most closely associated with folk music, his writings serve as an early example of the spread out from Germany of the interdependent categories of folk and art in their modern senses. Graham does not seem to have been *directly* influenced by German abstract philosophy or aesthetics, which played little role in the British musical world at the time.<sup>16</sup> Even Herder and the more practical side of German Romanticism was still largely unknown in Britain and seem not to have swayed Graham at the level of word choice in 1816.<sup>17</sup> However, new ideas about music obviously were percolating through to musicians, through the Romantic poets and painters in Britain, and (even if there were no great "Romantic" composers at home)<sup>18</sup> through new music streaming in from the Continent. Thus Graham reveres the same three exemplary "modern artists" (169, 161) – Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven – who had just been pronounced "Romantic" by the German critic and composer E. T. A. Hoffmann.<sup>19</sup> His rhetoric may be less impassioned than Hoffmann's but his implications are similar. Indeed, Graham's ideas seem to have resonated in Germany: his account was praised and partially translated in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.<sup>20</sup>

By the 1830s, when Graham contributed the article on "music" to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,<sup>21</sup> the German discourse

<sup>15</sup> See the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 22: 315–16.

<sup>16</sup> The German idealists did have an influence in Britain: a cult of Kant emerged there by the early nineteenth century. (See René Wellek, *Immanuel Kant in England* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931]; Martha Woodmansee, "The Uses of Kant in England," in *The Author, Art, and the Market*.) Coleridge was heavily influenced not only by Kant but also by Schelling and other German philosophers, developing his own outlines of a holistic, organic creative process in detail. Nevertheless, the influence of this abstract philosophy on most practicing British musicians appears very indirect.

<sup>17</sup> Graham derived his terminology from the long English-language discourse on music, "national" and otherwise, during the later eighteenth century. His choice of the word "classical" itself shows this independence from Germany – since he uses it much as many Germans would use "Romantic" (i.e. sometimes in *opposition* to eighteenth-century music). René Wellek explains how the German opposition of Classic and Romantic did not transfer to England – so that, for example, some of the English "Romantic" poets did not see themselves as such at the time (*Concepts of Criticism*, 145–5); Wellek's argument is that their project was similar to the German "Romantic" project even if they did not use the same language (Shelley, for instance, called imagination the "principle of synthesis," *Concepts of Criticism*, 181).

<sup>18</sup> Dahlhaus has gone as far as to say "English romanticism was represented in music solely by John Field – in other words poorly – but left its mark on the history of opera librettos and program music through the literary influence of Scott and Byron" (*Nineteenth-Century Music*, 18). For Dahlhaus's "English," read British/Irish obviously, since Field was Irish and Scott Scottish. Field also spent most of his life in Russia, so Dahlhaus's statement is fairly problematic all round.

<sup>19</sup> See his review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, reprinted in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer: Music Criticism*, ed. David Charlton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 234–51, esp. 237–8.

<sup>20</sup> *AmZ* 18 (1816), 629–36.

<sup>21</sup> The article was reprinted in G. F. Graham, *An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Musical Composition, Including the Article "Music" in the Seventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia*



had been more fully absorbed into English, and Graham's own rhetoric seems more "Romantic" – entirely eschewing the older equation of art to science and artifice. He now speaks explicitly of "the great composer endowed with genius" (39), and invokes the familiar "masterworks" as well: "The magnificent works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, not to speak of many other great German and Italian composers, were not produced by blind adherence to old rules of art [i.e. art in the old, scientific sense], but by an enlightened view of things, far beyond what the authors of these rules contemplated" (4). These masterworks set the rules for the future, serving "as models for succeeding productions" (39). Dismissing the very idea of a "theory of taste in the fine arts" (as had Herder), Graham contends: "It cannot be too often repeated that all the rules laid down by theorists" relate "merely to the mechanical portions of these arts" (4, emphasis in original). Graham relegates the scientific side of music to the sphere of acoustics and related concepts – and thus, whether he is discussing "the untutored song" of "the milk-maid" (2) or the compositions of an individual genius, Graham, like Herder, assures us that the creative process itself has nothing to do with calculation and artifice.<sup>22</sup> He attributes a musical imagination such as Beethoven's – the ability to be fired by ideas such as a sunset and turn that poetic inspiration into music – to a basically synthetic process, a "strange alchemy of mind yet unknown to musical theorists" (39). Graham uses organic terminology for genius as well: "Genius and perseverance have culled the sweetest flowers; while mathematical investigations have, as yet, only groped among the soil from which these blossoms sprang" (2).

As in any country that had absorbed the German idea of synthetic art, it was now impossible for art-musicians in Britain to ignore calls to ground their work in something collective (the folk), and impossible for folk collectors (the "tradition" camp) to ignore the position of their texts as potential material for "high" art. Both camps were invested in the relationships depicted in Figure 6.1 (page 204). Graham, for example, may appear critical of "national music" in some of his writing, but he went on to head a massive project to collect a large and affordable edition of Scottish folk music in 1848–9,<sup>23</sup> writing all of the annotations

*Britannica, With an Introduction and Appendix* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1838). Parenthetical citations in the next two paragraphs refer to this publication.

<sup>22</sup> Both acoustics and theoretical "rules" are given due and full exposition in the article, once Graham has made clear that these rules do not explain human creativity; but he is critical of older scholars (Leibniz, Euler, and Descartes) who attribute music's effects to our recognition of its mathematical qualities, countering: "Does the milk-maid calculate the ratios of the intervals in her untutored song, and take pleasure in it, or the reverse, according to her perception of their simplicity or complexity?" (*Essay*, 2).

<sup>23</sup> *The Songs of Scotland, Adapted to their Appropriate Melodies: Arranged With Pianoforte Accompaniments* by G. F. Graham, T. M. Mundie, J. T. Surenne, H. E. Dibdin, Finlay Dun,



for the collection, and composing the piano accompaniment for many of the melodies. In the Introduction, Graham turns an interested ear toward tradition, suggesting that many of the Scottish melodies had "existed in a simple and rudimental state" for centuries.<sup>24</sup> The songs represent something important for artists to absorb as history, culture, and tradition – even if Graham does not see them as aesthetic art in themselves. On the other side of the coin, Graham's compatriot, the antiquarian Robert Chambers, may sound as if he is simply upholding national music as "tradition" in the "Historical Essay on Scottish Song" attached to his 1829 collection of *Scottish Songs*. Here he discusses how the "better" orders of society, who had only relished music and poetry "in proportion as they were artificially and skilfully [*sic*] elaborated" have now become aware of "the touching beauties of simple national melody."<sup>25</sup> Yet soon afterward he shows a strong awareness of the new aestheticizing demands, suggesting that without editing or rewriting, many songs "could only be interesting in an antiquarian, and not in a literary point of view."<sup>26</sup> When it came to the melodies, Chambers complained just as Graham did about the situation in Scotland: "It is to be feared that the beauty of the [national] melodies is itself partly to be blamed for the indifference to *higher music*" there.<sup>27</sup> Both the "traditionalist" collector (Chambers) and the "art" composer (Graham) are now acutely aware of the interdependence of "tradition" and a "higher" aesthetic realm.

So by the early nineteenth century, we can see the spread in Anglophone discourse of the modern folk and art music categories, which had become closely intertwined with each other. Invoking *either* category, because both were dependent on origins for their claims of import and authenticity, now involved mystifying those origins – often by dwelling on the idea of genius. Graham's "national music" – the naïve, idealized past-within-the-present of the milk-maid's "untutored song" – invokes origins as cultural nationhood, while he explains how the work of "great composers" differs from "national" music, yet grows naturally by a "strange alchemy of mind." Furthermore, although as recently as Ritson, "national music" written by idealized peasants had still been "*pure nature*" as opposed to "*mere art*,"<sup>28</sup> for Graham's and

*etc.*: Illustrated with Historical, Biographical, and Critical Notices by G. F. Graham, author of the article "Music" in the Seventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, etc. etc., 3 vols. (Edinburgh and London: Wood and Co. et al., 1848–9).

<sup>24</sup> *Songs of Scotland*, 1: iii. <sup>25</sup> Chambers, *Scottish Songs*, xli, xlii.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. Chambers held up Burns as an individual genius organically attached to his folk roots, and producing holistic masterpieces – in much the terms that many Romantic composers have been praised (see *ibid.*, lx–lxi).

<sup>27</sup> Chambers, in the essay on "St. Cecilia's Hall," written for the 1847 expansion of *Traditions of Edinburgh* (vol. 6 of *Select Writings of Robert Chambers* [Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1847]), 245–6, emphasis mine.

<sup>28</sup> Ritson, *Scottish Songs*, xcvi.

Chambers's generation, art as the realm of individual genius is no longer mere. (In 1828, one positive review of George Thomson's collection of national airs set by Haydn, Beethoven and others already transferred to English the German Romantic idea of a closed circle – joining the way “national music” broke rules and the way individual composers of genius broke the same rules, to create similar effects.<sup>29</sup>) The German conception of art music – representing the filtering of the (universal) rules of “natural genius” through individual achievement – had reached Britain with full force.

**Universalism as idiom: from “national music”  
to “national art music”**

Notably, when Robert Chambers expressed his wish that Scots would have more appreciation for “higher music,” he still equated that higher music primarily with “the German and the Italian muses”;<sup>30</sup> and Graham's trio of heroes was also Germanic. This was hardly a satisfying state of affairs for cultural nationalists whose countries were not full of opportunities for a specifically German education in art music. Some new path towards writing “higher” music would need to develop that could encompass the aspirations of composers from “peripheral” nations. To this end, these composers and their supporters began to create a new kind of “national music.”

Even before it was synthesized into Romantic art, “national music” had staked a claim to universality – because genius was from the 1760s associated with a pan-human nature, and national music had from its first appearance represented this universal genius. In the formulation of the idea of “folk modality,” for example, we have seen that nationalist observers of Scottish music stressed elements they considered peculiar to Scotland, but then reduced those elements to a musical equivalent of a universal grammar – a modal substructure supposedly hardwired into all humans and thereby shared with the folk music of all nations. The uniqueness of any specific “folk” apparently lay in *which* particular features it preserved from the hypothetically shared human “state of nature.” As the years went on, the notion of aesthetic synthesis itself was drawn in to support the idea of national groups as representatives

<sup>29</sup> See *The Harmonicon* 6 (1828), 8–15. The reviewer speaks of how in Thomson's collection the “national music” in its “purest form” (8) has been coupled to settings by the “greatest masters that Germany can boast” (11). The article refers to a backlash against the collection because of the settings being by foreign composers, but it asks “[h]ave not the brilliant instances of genius, exhibited in many of these accompaniments, shown to our artists the road to improvement, and stimulated their efforts?” (11). The review then notes that some of the same original effects appear in national melodies as in the original ideas of these great composers, and thus the two are compatible after all.

<sup>30</sup> *Select Writings of Robert Chambers*, 6: 246.

of broader humanity: individual music that had absorbed the folk collective was supposedly universal in its power. There were really three levels involved in this process: the art composer (1), who represented and synthesized a specific (that is “local”) national collective (2), which in turn came to represent a manifestation of the universal human collective (3). Working composers in “peripheral” countries soon hit upon a way to use this three-level scheme for the creation of their own synthetic art music: all they needed to do was use their own country’s folk music as a base for their individual art. In this way, their work could be both local-national and pan-national.

Thus, in the middle of the nineteenth century, as many European nations discovered their respective folks and then set about aestheticizing those particular collectives, both the English term “national music” and its many equivalents in other languages took on new meanings in addition to their original meaning (i.e. standing for what we now call folk music): there was such a thing now as “national” *art* music – often described as national *schools* of art music – in which composers built on their specific national folk traditions to create universal art in the German mold. Undoubtedly, the recognition of different styles in the “cultivated” music of different nations goes back to a time before the nineteenth century (in fact, as I argued in Chapter 1, the widespread nature of such recognition was basically a product of the emergence of cultural nationalism a century earlier). But the idea of national art music as such, with its rich field of connotations, was a nineteenth-century phenomenon. It served as cultural capital in *two* ways: as a form of “tradition” (representing the newly conceived national “folk” as a whole), and also as aesthetic achievement – as proof of the existence of individual, synthesizing artistic geniuses within each national populace. Composers from Glinka to Gade and onward through Dvořák and Grieg to the twentieth century would set themselves up in this framework. Bartók’s writing can again stand as an archetypal formulation of the claims made for national “schools” ever since the mid-nineteenth century: while he stressed the idea of ethnic purity in his work on different folk traditions – hence the local and national(istic) – he also maintained that were the data-pool large enough, all of the differing folk musics of the world could eventually be traced back to “a few primitive forms, primitive types, and kinds of primitive style.”<sup>31</sup> Coming from an art-musician who was also a

<sup>31</sup> Bartók, *Essays*, 27. Of course, this abstraction is accomplished in Bartók’s writing via the usual ancient Greek, China–Asia link based on pentatonicism (see for example *Essays*, 11, 74, 179–80, 321, etc.), though Bartók does not dwell single-mindedly on pitch and scale as many of his forerunners did.

collector, Bartók's emphasis on the local-as-universal implied that his own art music, even when built on local elements of national traditions, was universal in meaning and appeal.

One major stumbling block still presented itself for all the composers who sought to work with this model, however. Namely, the Germans – having invented the whole process – made the rules. This allowed German musical writers to pull off a real coup: skipping the middle step of the three-level process in which an individual stood for a nation that stood for humanity. More emphasis could be placed on the synthetic elements of the top layer (the achievements of the individual genius) by starting with a middle (national) layer already conflated with complete universality; and that is how the Germans painted their own folk music. Because the new “art music” was so important to German cultural pride, the rationalizations for this music propounded by musicians and critics in Germany had always been allied with nationalist programs.<sup>32</sup> But German ideas of art were based specifically on claims about the German character in general: Germans asserted that their instrumental music was the most universal partly because of their belief that the folk culture it absorbed was itself uniquely universal. Generally this claim was made on the grounds that German culture in all its forms inherently selected and synthesized the best of all other nations. Countless thinkers – from Schubart to Hegel to Hanslick and beyond – outlined this belief in

<sup>32</sup> See Morrow, *German Music Criticism* for early examples. By the early nineteenth century, the symphony itself was closely bound up in this nationalism, framed as the great “German” art form and the most “universal” genre. See Sanna Pederson, “On the Task of the Music Historian: The Myth of the Symphony after Beethoven,” *Repercussions* 2/2 (1993), 5–30, esp. 12–24; Pederson, “A. B. Marx, Berlin Concert Life, and German National Identity,” *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 18 (1994), 87–107. Bernd Sponheuer plays down the “nationalist” implications of the high-low split in German aesthetics, but nonetheless illustrates how German music came to be associated with the “high” sphere of truthful, inner art and the Italian with the “low” sphere of superficial, commercial music (*Musik als Kunst und Nicht-Kunst*, ch. 1). Incidentally, while Sponheuer documents how this Italian sphere (usually represented by Rossini) was often labeled “natural,” this “nature” now rarely carries the picturesque connotations of sublime purity in the hegemonic German and German-influenced discourse; Italian “nature” generally now meant unthinking, sensual “animal” pleasure, not tempered by common sense. This would support my argument that in Germany “nature” as “folk” purity in music was by now associated more with Scotland and the “north” (and with the *Volk* within Germany) than with Italy. Note for example that *William Tell*, the only Rossini work that exemplified the positive folkish qualities of nature to Germans, was actually reclaimed by Wilhelm Riehl as a “German” work, for these very reasons (Riehl, “*Volkslied*,” 680). Italy, meanwhile, had come more often to represent what would later emerge as “popular” music (hence Rossini was painted as crassly commercial by many Germans). For many *Italians* or champions of Italian music who did not (yet) buy into the German Romantic aesthetic of pure, high, organically synthetic art, Rossini could still stand as nature to German “art/artifice” (in the picturesque sense). See for example, *Musik als Kunst und Nicht-Kunst*, 16–17, 27–8.

different forms.<sup>33</sup> These claims could be used to devalue non-German "national" art music precisely because it did require the middle layer.

In this process, the German terms "Volkslied" and "Nationallied" (which Herder had used interchangeably) began to grow apart, with the latter picking up implications that mired it in the middle level of bounded (non-German) locality. Wagner, deriding the poor "opera composer" (almost by definition not German), asserted: "The true Folk-element the opera-composer had not the wit to grasp; to have done this, he must have worked in the spirit and with the notions of the Folk, i.e. himself have been a part and parcel of it. Only the *Insular* (*das Sonderliche*), in which the particularity of Folkhood shows itself to him, could he lay hold of; and this is the *National*."<sup>34</sup> This "national" – to Wagner basically a synonym for local color – was "but a fossilized memento of the past" and could become nothing but a "*modish curiosity*."<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, true folk music transcended these limits: "The summit toward which all healthy Folkhood tends" is the "*purely human* [*rein Menschlich*]"<sup>36</sup> and this quality Wagner clearly conflates with Germanness. Of Weber's "Folk-opera" he writes: "leaving aside all local-national idiosyncrasies, it is of broad and general emotional expression . . . it speaks directly to the hearts of men, no matter what their national peculiarity, simply because in it the 'Purely-human' comes so unbesmeared to show. In the world-spread potency of Weber's Melody may we better recognise the essence of the *German* spirit."<sup>37</sup> Between these two sentences, Wagner has simply replaced his term "purely-human" with the word German without further comment; the implication is that by working "as" the *German* folk, the German composer works "as the human."

As the German idea of art music became the international idea of art music over the middle of the century, universality remained so closely linked to German ideologies of art that the omnipresent interplay between local and universal came to allow many localities in music, but only one true "universal" – determined by the culturally privileged. Richard Taruskin has described in several studies the "dilemma that 'peripheral' artists have had to face since the establishment of German hegemony in 'classical music'":<sup>38</sup> composers who were not German (or part of the "panromanogermanic" mainstream as he puts it) could only make a notable appearance on the international stage in the first place

<sup>33</sup> See Schubart, *Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, 238–9, for an early example explaining how the German character appealed to all the world.

<sup>34</sup> *Opera and Drama*, 58. (Original in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3: 329, but the *Sonderlich* parenthetical appears in Ashton Ellis's translation.)

<sup>35</sup> *Opera and Drama*, 59.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 62 (German original from *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3: 333).

<sup>37</sup> *Opera and Drama*, 53; emphasis in original.

<sup>38</sup> This formulation is from Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music*, 3: 348.

by invoking their *specifically* national folk traditions (otherwise they were seen only as foreign imitators of German style), but this strategy then worked against them:

In conventional “canonical” historiography Russian (or Czech, or Spanish, or Norwegian) composers are in a double-bind. The group identity is at once the vehicle of their international appeal (as “naïfs”) and the guarantee of their secondary status vis-à-vis the unmarked “universal.” Without exotic native dress such composers cannot even achieve secondary canonical rank, but with it they cannot achieve more. However admirably it is apparently done, casting a composer as a “nationalist” is pre-eminently a means of exclusion from the critical and academic canon (though not, obviously, from the performing repertoire).<sup>39</sup>

Taruskin’s list of countries stands as a representative sampling of peripheral nations, and the more peripheral the nation, the more was stacked against its composers.

### **Between center and periphery: “northern” music**

Scotland provides a particularly interesting case for studying the complex interaction between center and periphery in the period at hand.

In some ways Scotland was the most “peripheral” country of all – having been the original folk Other. Back before the folk-art split, a composer such as Oswald could straddle Scottish and international styles without worrying about being a “folk composer” or an “art composer,”

<sup>39</sup> Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 48. See also Taruskin’s article on “Nationalism” in the *New Grove*, rev. edn (especially sections 10–11, 17: 699–700), his *Oxford History*, especially ch. 39; and Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, ch. 2. Note that those few “peripheral” composers who have succeeded in entering the “panromanogermanic” mainstream have done so not only by emphasizing the universal rather than the specific nature of their own “national” music, but also by consciously promoting their adaptation of the “universal” factors of their “national” materials toward the artistic ends of “panromanogermanic” art music. (This was true of Bartók, perhaps the most academically “mainstreamed” of the non-German nationalist composers. Benjamin Britten is another example; he stressed the cosmopolitan approach of the English composers he admired, and scrupulously attacked what he saw as the provincial use of English folk music. See Britten, “England and the Folk-Art Problem,” *Modern Music* 18 [1941], 71–5.) Dahlhaus claims that only in the later part of the nineteenth century did nationalism take a more aggressive stance emphasizing the “introverted” and “xenophobic” at the expense of the universal or “cosmopolitan” (“Nationalism and Music,” 82–3). But Dahlhaus cites *Opera and Drama* to argue that Wagner’s early nationalism was “cosmopolitan” because he stressed the universal qualities of “folk” music; and as we have just seen, it is clear from that very work that for the local to become universal for Wagner, it had to be German. Dahlhaus makes similar claims about Schumann’s idea of cosmopolitan nationalism (*ibid.*, 84–5), but for Schumann as well, the non-German could not really be universal (see below). In other words, Dahlhaus’s claim overlooks the fact that the idea of “universal art” is always framed from the German viewpoint in the first place. See also Celia Applegate, “How German Is It? Nationalism and the Idea of Serious Music in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *19th-Century Music* 21 (1998), 275–7, for a discussion of the blurred lines between the German and the universal as a continued presence in twentieth-century scholarship.



he was just a “composer” who did well for himself, becoming a “chamber composer” to King George III on the latter’s accession to the throne. But by the time the Scottish fiddler Niel Gow (1727–1807) was flourishing, to be a great Scottish musician meant to be a great “folk” musician. Gow and his ilk are today studied in “world music” or “folk music” classes rather than in surveys of “Western [art] music.” Within Scotland Gow garnered a good deal of esteem, the patronage of the Duke of Atholl, and a comfortable existence. At his death, he was eulogized in the *Scots Magazine* as a “natural genius.” Yet even here, the implication is not that he rivaled the great composers of “universal” music, but that he was “unrivalled in his department of our national music”<sup>40</sup> – and most of the obituary is devoted to Gow’s skill as a performer and personality rather than a composer. Robert Burns called Gow a genius “in his way.”<sup>41</sup> One English tourist met Gow and was impressed, again in a limited sort of way: “His only music is that of his native country, which he has acquired chiefly by ear, being entirely self-taught; but he plays the Scotch airs with a spirit and enthusiasm peculiar to himself.”<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps in Gow’s case, his reputation was satisfactory for himself: although he and his sons published their fiddle tunes, he cannot be said to have attempted a career as an “art musician.” He had a successful career doing what he loved most, and indeed became a legend within the history of Scottish folk music.<sup>43</sup> Others, however, *did* try to compete on international terms, and it was these musicians who suffered the most from the post-Ossianic stereotype of Scotland as *inherently* Other. Even in the 1770s, before German art music became the clear center of gravity, the visiting Englishman Edward Topham could praise Scotland’s “national” music at length,<sup>44</sup> but continue:

The modern Music of this Country (of which there are very few composers, notwithstanding the great encouragement it meets with, and makes one of the principal diversions of every great town in Scotland) is not of the same excellence, or breathes that natural spirit and agreeable sweetness which distinguishes that of former times. At present they rather endeavour to imitate other nations, than to have a style peculiar to themselves; and their pieces are made up of such variety of tastes, that they may be said to be harmonic Oglíos. Such is the case of my Lord

<sup>40</sup> *Scots Magazine* 71 (1809), 3. Also cited in Mary Anne Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1983), 94.

<sup>41</sup> *Letters of Robert Burns*, Letter 591, 2: 254.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Garnett, *Observations on a Tour Through the Highlands and Part of the Western Isles of Scotland* (London: T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1800), 78. Also cited in Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers*, 101.

<sup>43</sup> For an account of Gow’s life, successes, styles, and posthumous reputation, see Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers*, ch. 5.

<sup>44</sup> [Edward Topham], *Letters from Edinburgh, Written in the Years 1774 and 1775: Containing Some Observations on the Diversions, Customs, Manners, and Laws of the Scotch Nation, During a Six Months Residence in Edinburgh* (London: J. Dodsley, 1776), 370–1.



Kelly, whose admirable talents and genius in this science have been corrupted and restrained by his poorly copying the compositions of other masters. Had he pursued that originality of fancy and expression, which is really natural to him, there is no doubt but that Scotland, at this hour, might have boasted of her musical excellence, equal to any other nation in Europe. As proof of this, I refer you to those wilder compositions, where his proper genius has broke forth, where his imagination heated by wine, and his mind unfettered by precept, and unbiased by example, has indulged itself in all its native freedom.<sup>45</sup>

Of course, *had* Kelly held to his “wilder,” “natural,” “native” genius in all his pieces, without introducing elements from his Mannheim training, it is doubtful that Topham would be discussing him as a “modern” composer at all. Kelly would be remembered like Gow as a folk musician. As Scotland remained almost synonymous with folk music (Friedrich Chrysander could write still in 1875 in Germany that it was “no exaggeration, but a simple truth, that Scotland had the most perfect body of folksong anywhere in existence”<sup>46</sup>), it would seem that Scots suffered an acute case of Taruskin’s “double-bind.”

In other ways, however, Scotland’s position as the *Ur*-folk made it *less* marked as exotic or local. This dual capacity stemmed from the long discourse around “northern” nations, going back through Rousseau’s essay on the Origin of Languages.<sup>47</sup> A particularly relevant construction of the “north” came with Herder’s reception of Ossian as the “northern” counterpart to Homer, implying that the Germans were *part* of this northern heritage – and that the Scots, and the Celts in general, were ancestral Germans. Certainly this was how Klopstock viewed Ossian. The idea of a “northern” race, including the ancestral Germans, spread across Europe – rearing its head everywhere, even in Stendhal’s biography of Rossini.<sup>48</sup> (We have also seen that the idea of northern nations became integrated into the Scots’ own self-image, beginning with Blair’s dissertation on the authenticity of Ossian in the

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 373–4.

<sup>46</sup> *AmZ*, new series 10 (1875), 291; from a review of Scottish and Irish song collections.

<sup>47</sup> The discourse in fact goes back further, sometimes drawing on Tacitus. For an early formulation of the northern connections, see Paul Henri Mallet, *Introduction à l’Histoire de Dannemarc, où l’on traite de la religion, des loix, des mœurs et des usages des anciens Danois* (Copenhagen: [C. & A. Philibert], 1755). This was a prefatory volume to Mallet’s history of the Danish monarchy, and he also translated the Edda. The introductory and Edda volumes appeared in English as *Northern Antiquities: Or, A Description of the Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws of the Ancient Danes, and other Northern Nations, including those of our own Saxon Ancestors, with a translation of the Edda*, 2 vols. (London: T. Caran, 1770). Interestingly, the translator begins with a long Preface explaining that he actually thinks Mallet and others are mistaken in assuming the “Celtic” and “Gothic/Teutonic” races to have been one.

<sup>48</sup> See the chapter “Of the Peoples of Northern Europe, considered as Musicians” in Stendhal, *Life of Rossini*, new and rev. edn, trans. Richard N. Coe (New York: Orion Press, 1970), 459–64.

1760s.<sup>49</sup>) Ossian inspired Herder to look for Germany’s “own” folk music precisely because of the close connection between the peoples; after all, on the deepest level, what set the idea of the folk apart from the New World “savages” or the “Orientals” was their tangible connection to Europeans’ own self-perception.

Consider the reception of Beethoven’s pieces invoking the folk. The success of the “Ode to Joy” may have depended on its “unmarked” quality – on the fact that the “folk” summoned in the work is a German “universal” one, rather than coming by way of an exotic middle layer. (The “Turkish” passage is an exotic *episode* within the whole, and, as such, unimportant to the piece’s reception as universal.) But Beethoven’s music also showed the potential for Scotland to represent the universal by playing an “*Ur-German*” role. The settings of Scottish national songs he wrote for George Thomson were not “unmarked,” they were geographically foreign and specific; yet as long as Op. 108 had been seen as Beethoven’s original creation in the early reviews, Beethoven’s engagement with Scotland was seen as a part of his *own creativity* – and thus German and universal at heart. In these early reviews, when the pieces were hailed as true masterpieces, Loewe for example had considered the settings as the continuation of the tradition of Schulz, Reichardt and Zelter, and like the other reviewers had upheld Op. 108 as exemplary *Lieder*, an inherently German genre in this context. Nor did Beethoven himself consider the melodies’ specific idiosyncrasies as inherently “foreign” traits; as we have seen, he treated their Otherness simultaneously as characteristically Scottish (to the extent of his knowledge) and as part of his developing ideas about the universal ancient modal roots of music.

Ostensibly, then, once the Herder-influenced view of Scotland as *Ur-German* spread, this should have placed Scottish and “northern” composers at a distinct advantage relative to other “peripheral” nations when they did strive for glory on German terms. In reality, this was not what happened at all. Some Scottish “art” composers of the early nineteenth century are remembered now more for serving their national folk music (as with the collections and writings of G. F. Graham, etc.) than for their own compositions in continental styles. Others, who did not engage with Scottish folk music, are basically forgotten, as has been the fate of John Thomson, perhaps the most talented Scottish art composer of this period (his early death did not help).<sup>50</sup> Even after the idea of national schools was better established, and later nineteenth-century

<sup>49</sup> *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian*, see for example 4. Also see *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, ed. Walter Scott, Robert Jamieson and Henry Weber (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne and Co., 1814).

<sup>50</sup> One of the installments of John Purser’s “Music of Scotland” BBC radio series was devoted to Thomson’s music, which can be heard in that program (program 22, originally broadcast 23 February 1992); see also Purser, *Scotland’s Music*, 211–17.

Scots such as Hamish MacCunn and Alexander Mackenzie could at times use their “native garb” in a bid for international recognition, their success was quite limited. Certainly they did little to create an image of Scotland that was more art-musical than folk-musical.

Within Scotland, the issue was perhaps compounded by the lack of German-type musical training available<sup>51</sup> – by the literal peripheral distance from Germany’s centers of musical education – and outside of Scotland there were composers of “Nordic”/Ossianic music who went to Germany and had greater international success. The best example was the Dane Niels Gade, who actively sought to translate a pan-Nordic *Ur-folkishness* into universality. Gade’s overtures *Echoes of Ossian* (Op. 1) and *In the Highlands* (Op. 7) are explicit attempts to link the primitive folk genius of Ossian to modern artistic genius. Indeed, the former work bears an inscribed motto, two lines from Uhland: “Formulas do not constrain us, Our art is called poetry.”<sup>52</sup> This was exactly the same approach Beethoven took in his settings of Scottish songs: focusing on the potential of the collective primitive genius to liberate the individual genius, as a closed circle. (As if to achieve this link between individual artistic freedom and ancient natural freedom, Gade flavors the overtures with song-like themes in dark minor keys, and sometimes suggests pentatonicism and other modal effects; see Example 12.<sup>53</sup>) Gade was generally well received in Germany; he became close with Mendelssohn, and his *Ossian* Overture and First Symphony were praised highly by Schumann in various articles in the *NZM*. Nevertheless, while Schumann called Gade a “genuine master” in his letters,<sup>54</sup> John Daverio also documents the specifically local character that Gade’s style implied for Schumann: Gade’s “unique Nordic character,” along with Chopin’s Polish manner, could “speak to their nation[s] in [their] own musical tongues.” Taken as he was with Gade, Schumann even in his moments of highest praise cautioned that Gade must be careful not to “founder on his

<sup>51</sup> The first music professorship in Scotland was established only in 1839 at Edinburgh University. (John Thomson was the first appointee.) Stendhal suggests that the Scottish people were a musical race, and had Scotland been a rich country rather than a poor one, its “subterranean springs of natural music” would have been caught and “distilled into an essence of *ideal beauty*, and that, in due course, the term *Scottish music* would have sounded as familiar in our ears as that of *German music* does to-day.” Scotland “might unquestionably [have been] expected to give Europe a new Haydn or another Mozart” (*Life of Rossini*, 462).

<sup>52</sup> “Formel hält uns nicht gebunden, / Unsre Kunst heisst Poesie.”

<sup>53</sup> For more analysis of Gade’s “Nordic tone,” see Friedhelm Krummacher, *Musik im Norden: Abhandlung über skandinavische und norddeutsche Musik* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), 108; R. Larry Todd, “Mendelssohn’s Ossianic Manner, with a New Source – On *Lena’s Gloomy Heath*,” in *Mendelssohn and Schumann: Essays on their Music and its Context*, ed. Jon W. Finson and R. Larry Todd (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984), esp. 140, 146; and John Daverio, “Schumann’s Ossianic Manner,” *19th-Century Music* 21 (1998), 257–9.

<sup>54</sup> See Daverio, “Schumann’s Ossianic Manner,” 254–5; the letter is cited on p. 255.

nationalism"; he added "[a]ll artists should be exhorted to acquire originality and then to reject it."<sup>55</sup> This particular use of "originality" is somewhat different from Marx's ideal of being authentic to *oneself*: it seems more akin to Wagner's "Sonderlich" – being authentic to a specific local-national "tradition." If Schumann prefigures Wagner by a few years here in his rejection of the local-national in music, his wife had been even more emphatic the year before (1843): "[Gade's] talent seems to go only so far ... for the Nordic national character ... soon becomes monotonous, like all national music in general."<sup>56</sup> Sadly, when Gade took this advice and turned away from writing distinctly "Nordic" music after his youth, his later pieces were forgotten as "epigonal"; as Friedhelm Krummacker points out, all his non-"Nordic" works fell out of the canon.<sup>57</sup> So Gade too fell victim to the double-bind Taruskin describes: he was limited to being either exotic or epigonal.

Example 12: Gade, *Im Hochland* Overture, Op. 7, beginning; reduction (Copenhagen: W. Hansens Forlag, [1878]).

Violino

Andante.

Niels W. Gade, Op. 7

Pianoforte.

Andante.

con Sordino

pp

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 256–7, 264 (Daverio's translation); for original, see NZM 20 (1844), 2.

<sup>56</sup> Cited in Daverio, "Schumann's Ossianic Manner," 264.

<sup>57</sup> Krummacker, *Norden*, 104–6.

Ultimately, it appears that whether Scottish/northern music was seen as periphery or center was largely a function of who framed it. Even before the vicious racializing of Germanness in Wagner's writing, non-German music was subjected to an extra layer in the synthetic art-process – having to fight through its locality in an attempt to reach the universal. Taruskin's "double-bind" was already entrapping non-German composers even when they were attempting a pan-northern nationality. They were inherently seen as representatives of local-national collective tradition rather than individuals channeling the truly universal. Although Gade took the same approach to Scotland (and to aestheticizing folk tradition in general) as Beethoven had, the reception of Beethoven's Scottish settings faltered only on the fact that the melodies were not "authentic and original" enough (i.e. in Marx's sense) to Beethoven as individual – whereas Gade's reception faltered because his music was apparently *too* "authentic and original" (i.e. as *Sonderlich*) to the collective genius of a nation that just did not happen to be *quite* German. Gade's place of birth alone worked against him: he could not compose simply "as a human" in Wagner's sense. His agency dissolved in the middle level of mediation, in the national collective.<sup>58</sup>

### **Some approaches to "national music" from the German center**

While the geographical legacy of the folk and art categories was highly prejudicial in the case of peripheral composers, the opportunities for German composers to engage with "national music" were considerably less uniform and predictable, or less predetermined. The potential geographical implications of folk and art music have been less explored from the point of view of the center – that is, from within Germany. From Wagner's writing and some of Schumann's, it is obvious that "national" could be a dirty word in Germany when it referred to a nation that was not German. But "national music" did not *always* have these derogatory connotations for German composers. It was understood that "serious" German art-composers were striving for universality at this point, and since their German cultural or even racial background meant that their individual agency would be given a wide license, the options were open for them to put the folk toward universal ends in more varied ways – from each other, or even from piece to piece.

In fact, it was not even necessary for German musicians to draw direct attention to the folk distillation in their music (even if such folk elements might be "discovered" in later reception). They could

<sup>58</sup> Taruskin describes a similar pattern in reception history with Chopin (*Oxford History*, 3: 357).

represent their collective nation and their folk by absorbing music that had presumably already absorbed the folk. Again, to take Bartók's formulation (quoting Kodály): “Thus, from a musical point of view, it [folk music] means more to us [peripheral composers] than to those peoples that developed their own musical [i.e. art-musical!] style centuries ago. Folk music for those peoples became assimilated into their music, and a German musician will be able to find in Bach and Beethoven what we had to search for in our villages: the continuity of a national musical tradition.”<sup>59</sup> Much Beethoven reception, for example, suggests that his individual mind (composing “as the folk” in Wagner's terms) sublimates any actual folk-sounding material so completely that there is little trace left of its sound – what remains is only the “national” itself (not as *Sonderlich* but as German universal). This may explain why, although Beethoven only *explicitly* invoked the folk on limited occasions, almost all of his major works have been used to represent the German collective. Or perhaps the plural collectives would be a better term given that, as David Dennis notes, “Since [Beethoven's] lifetime – especially after 1870 – every major interest in Germany claimed this composer and his music to be symbolic of its particular vision of the German future.”<sup>60</sup> Because organic art focused on individual artistic achievement as distillation of the universal, it was entirely possible for a German composer after Beethoven to internalize fully the Herderian folk-art conceptual framework of Figure 6.1 (page 204), and then ignore it most of the time, assuming that by building on German art tradition, the national and pan-human collectives were already represented.

An extreme may be seen in the position taken by Schenker and Schoenberg. Schoenberg spoke of “the wall separating folk music from art,” with the two kinds of music being like “petroleum and olive oil, or ordinary water and holy water ... they mix as poorly as oil and water.”<sup>61</sup> Yet he also claimed his own deliberately *un-folklike* style (including the twelve-tone method) as “national”: “remarkably, nobody has yet appreciated that my music, produced on German soil, without foreign influences, is a living example of an art able most effectively to oppose Latin and Slav hopes of hegemony and derived through and through from the traditions of German music.”<sup>62</sup> (Schoenberg then outlines what he learned from Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and Brahms in order.) And, of course, the best German music

<sup>59</sup> Bartók, *Essays*, 347 (in “On the Significance of Folk Music”).

<sup>60</sup> David Dennis, *Beethoven in German Politics, 1870–1989* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 6, and see ch. 1 in general.

<sup>61</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 163, 162.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.



was to be accepted as the best *human* music: since Europeans “were also the colonizers, and in many ways the rulers of most of the non-European states, and were able to impose the advantages of our culture upon them, the European (mainly west- and central-European [i.e. German]) view of art is dominant in all these countries too, insofar as they are at all concerned with art in our sense.”<sup>63</sup> The category of aesthetic, synthetic, individual-universal art music here sits exactly as it does for Herder (Schoenberg too credited folk music with a natural “perfection”); only the messy problem of having to figure out a direct way to aestheticize folk tradition into art is taken out of the equation. Schoenberg can now draw on a written, art music “tradition” (in the broad sense of a validating past) that has all the cachet of authenticity, but is already aestheticized. In his own words: “I venture to credit myself with having written truly new music which, being based on tradition, is destined to become tradition.”<sup>64</sup>

Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century, most major German composers did have at least some interest in engaging directly with folk music as such to mediate aesthetically between the levels of individual art, national collective, and pan-human collective. We can briefly consider the wide variety of approaches these composers took by looking at examples drawing on Scottish music – with its simultaneously exotic and *Ur*-German potential. We have already seen that Beethoven (who tried different ways of invoking the folk directly) had in his Scottish song-settings used the locally exotic as a springboard for his thoughts about the universal. He made the specifically national features (the same type of features that Wagner would later deride as “fossilized memento[s] of the past”) into symbols of pan-human primitive nature. And because Beethoven was German, and because he was Beethoven, early critics were willing to go along with him, finding universal genius in the songs’ departures from the rules they knew. Yet there were many alternatives to Beethoven’s way of trying to universalize folk music aesthetically.

Felix Mendelssohn, one of the few German composers actually to tour Scotland, was not one of those who could appreciate Beethoven’s settings. Due to a combination of personal inclination and his strict musical education, he took a very different approach. Aged twenty, Mendelssohn had set off for Scotland with, in his own words, “a rake

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 174. Schenker was able to bypass “the people” by the same mechanism, without eliminating the idea of nature as rule-giver that made individual art universal: “In no respect does ‘the people’ exert influence upon nature or upon the genius. Genius alone transmits nature to us through his art” (Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. Ernst Oster [New York: Schirmer, 1979], 106).



for folk songs";<sup>65</sup> but once he finished his tour of Scotland and Wales, he had a very different reaction:

No national music for me! Ten thousand devils take all folkishness! . . . a harper sits in the hall of every reputed inn playing incessantly so-called folk melodies; that is infamous, vulgar, out-of tune [*falsch*] trash, with a hurdy-gurdy going *at the same time*! Anyone who, like myself, cannot endure Beethoven's national songs, should come here and listen to them bellowed out by rough, nasal voices, and accompanied with awkward bungling fingers, and not grumble.<sup>66</sup>

This is not the place for a full exploration of the aesthetic ideals suggested by Mendelssohn's reaction to music in Britain and to Beethoven's songs, but it seems clear that in the pronouncement above, he had come to use "national music" (and even "folk" in this particular context) as inherently local and coarse, directly opposed to the absolute art music history he cared so much about.

Thus, when Mendelssohn went on to compose several pieces inspired by his trip to Scotland, he chose to abstract and use the "folk" features he already found most easy to assimilate into his style. Instead of tapping into the universal *via* the local as Beethoven had, he would *limit* those jarring features that seemed exotically local (though without streamlining them completely as Kozeluch had done, since they still needed to represent a collective primal Other). The techniques that R. Larry Todd has isolated in Mendelssohn's Scottish compositions (pedals, dark sonorities, coloristic effects, "gapped" melodic shapes, etc.)<sup>67</sup> help suggest the bleak Highland expanses; but none is jarringly Other in the way that some of the experiments in Beethoven's song-settings are.

Mendelssohn's Scottish music did share some elements with Beethoven's: the older composer's encounter with Scottish music seemed to galvanize his thoughts about ancient modality at the time he was working on it, and so too did the younger's. Among Mendelssohn's papers is an 1838 letter from George Hogarth, a Scottish composer whom Mendelssohn had met on his trip, presenting Mendelssohn a

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in David Jenkins and Mark Visocchi, *Mendelssohn in Scotland* (London: Chappell & Co., 1978), 11.

<sup>66</sup> "Nur keine Nationalmusik! Zehn tausend Teufel sollen doch alles Volkthum holen! . . . ein Harfenist sitzt auf dem Flur jedes Wirthshauses von Ruf und spielt in einem fort sogenannte Volksmelodien, d. h. infames, gemeines, falsches Zeug, zu gleicher Zeit dudelt eben ein Leierkasten auch Melodien ab . . . Wenn man wie ich Beethoven's Nationallieder nicht ausstehen kann, so gehe man doch hierher und höre diese von kreischenden Nasenstimmen gegröhlt, begleitet von tölpelhaften Stümperfingern, und schimpfe nicht." Letter of 25 August 1829, in New York Public Library. My translation is altered from Hensel, *The Mendelssohn Family*, trans. Carl Klingemann (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882), 1: 213–14.

<sup>67</sup> See Todd, "Mendelssohn's Ossianic Manner," 142, 149, 153, 157; Todd, *The Hebrides and Other Overtures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), esp. 49.

copy of Daune and Dun's treatise on the Skene Manuscript (in which Dun had focused on the similarities of Scottish music to modal plainchant); the letter includes a suggestion that Mendelssohn try to get the book noticed in the Leipzig journals.<sup>68</sup> Ten years before, on his tour, Mendelssohn had also met and befriended Dun himself; he had accompanied Dun and Hogarth to a bagpipe competition and no doubt spent some time discussing Scottish music with his hosts,<sup>69</sup> so it seems unsurprising that Mendelssohn would see Scottish music in the terms Dun developed – that is, in terms of pre-tonal modal system – even before he received the copy of Dun's work on the Skene Manuscript.

However, Mendelssohn's own compositional turn to modality, unlike Beethoven's, was largely filtered through music he already understood, bypassing the middle engagement with the specifically Scottish. Among the three main instrumental works inspired by his idea of and trip to Scotland (the "Scottish" Symphony, the Hebrides Overture, and the less well-known Fantasy, Op. 28, which Mendelssohn in his notes called his "Sonata Ecossaïse"),<sup>70</sup> it is striking that one of the prime shared features is neither particularly Scottish, nor modal in any typically "folkish" sense. All these pieces feature prominent minor-key themes that cadence on the tonic, then the third, then the fifth degrees of the scale. In the overture, this is the opening gesture, moving B minor→D Major→F# minor (see Example 13), and the progression guides the choice of keys used during the development as well. In the symphony, this i→III→v progression underlies the main theme of the first movement after the slow introduction (here A minor→C Major→E minor, mm. 64–71), and is also important during the martial interludes in the slow movement (mm. 34–42) which function as the harmonic transitions. In general, this i→III→v motion unites Mendelssohn's

<sup>68</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library "Green Book" VIII (MS M.D.M. d.34), 165: (15 Dec. 1838). Hogarth states that the book ought to be of interest to musicians all over Europe. "If you can get it noticed in your Leipzig Journals, attention would thus be drawn to it on the Continent." Mendelssohn likely passed the publication along as requested, because about three months later, G. W. Fink wrote a lengthy review of Daune and Dun's book, constituting the lead article over two issues of the *AmZ*, and emphasizing his own pet theories about pentatonicism and the characteristics of "echt" old Gaelic music. See *AmZ* 41 (1839), 261–9, 277–86, plus "Beilage." Part of this review was translated into English and appeared in *The Musical World* 12 (1839), 162–3. The *AmZ* had published an article discussing pentatonicism in Scottish music in 1802 (vol. 4, 852–4), but Fink's article is much more extensive. The *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (6 [1839], 421–3, 442–5) also ran a long review by Philarète Chasles of the book.

<sup>69</sup> Dun had written an impromptu on Mendelssohn's departure from Edinburgh that Mendelssohn kept in his papers (in the Mendelssohn collection at Oxford, Bodleian Library MS M.D.M. d.8 (57) [ff. 63v–64r]), and later also requested a recommendation letter from Mendelssohn; see Bodleian Library "Green Book" XIII (MS M.D.M. d.39), 222.

<sup>70</sup> The work was begun as early as 1828, as a gift for Fanny, but it was completed, revised and published during and after the trip (Todd, *Hebrides*, 48).

Scottish pieces, setting them apart from his other works.<sup>71</sup> In his work on Mendelssohn's education, Todd has demonstrated how Mendelssohn's teacher, Zelter, trained the young composer to be especially sensitive to older, modal chorale tunes when harmonizing them, and that Zelter based his exercises for writing basses for chorale tunes on the work of his own teacher Kirnberger (especially on Kirnberger's ubiquitous text *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes*).<sup>72</sup> With this in mind, it is striking that Kirnberger taught the setting of modal tunes by arranging cadence points on a staff in order of desirability; and when he discussed Aeolian melodies, the three most "idiomatic" cadence points were the first, third, and fifth scale-degrees respectively.<sup>73</sup> Whether Mendelssohn took this literally or distilled it through his impressions of Scottish music, his consistent use of these three resting points in order in his Scottish music suggests an apparent abstraction from the locally Scottish into a German approach to modality – one that was a part of Mendelssohn's education and that he would probably have considered immediately universal.

Mendelssohn's letters make clear the extent to which his "Scottish" works were triggered by the sights he encountered on his trip,<sup>74</sup> so of course there were more recognizably local elements in the pieces as well. There is the famously pentatonic second movement of the Scottish Symphony, and much of the piece cultivates a general "Nordic" flavor using tools similar to Gade's. Mendelssohn also borrows a melodic formula that Dun claims, when "played or sung to a Scotchman, will instantly bring before his mind his native country."<sup>75</sup> This is the scale-degrees 5→6→1 in rising succession and with the last note twice as long as the first two. Mendelssohn turns this exact fragment into the melody of the repeated, hymnlike coda of his Scottish Symphony. Nevertheless, even here the traits are distilled through a familiar medium. As Peter Mercer-Taylor has pointed out, this coda also suggests the German amateur-male-choral (*Männerchor*) style<sup>76</sup> – a typically German

<sup>71</sup> The same overall harmonic motion by upward thirds is outlined in the exposition of the Fantasy's last movement (here F♯→A→C♯). Such progressions do appear elsewhere in the composer's output, but not as explicitly.

<sup>72</sup> See Todd, *Mendelssohn's Musical Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 2, 29–31.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–1.

<sup>74</sup> Mendelssohn's letter home from 7 August 1829 documents a Hebridean vista as the inspiration for the Hebrides Overture (indeed he actually wrote the first measures of the Overture into the letter – see Hensel, *Mendelssohn Family*, 1: 207); and the ruins of Holyrood palace served similarly to inspire the "beginning of my Scotch symphony" (see *ibid.*, 1: 198).

<sup>75</sup> Dun, Appendix to Daune, *Ancient Scottish Melodies*, 321.

<sup>76</sup> Peter Mercer-Taylor, "Mendelssohn's 'Scottish' Symphony and the Music of German Memory," 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music 19 (1995), 68–82. Mendelssohn himself wrote to David, the Leipzig concertmaster, that the piece should sound "clear and strong, like a Männerchor" (see *ibid.*, 70, n. 8).

Example 13: Mendelssohn, *Hebrides Overture*, beginning.

**Allegro moderato.**

Flauto I.

Flauto II.

Oboe I.

Oboe II.

Clarinetto I in A.

Clarinetto II in A.

Fagotto I.

Fagotto II.

Corni in D.

Trombe in D.

Timpani in H. Fts.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Viola.

Violoncello.

Basso.

M.B. 8.

approach to folk music (and related to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" as well). And interestingly, Mendelssohn had used the same 5→6→1 incipit and rhythm in an actual choral setting, setting the line "doch ist es Tag" for the druids and heathen in his *Erste Walpurgisnacht* cantata. In the broader view, even Mendelssohn's most localized "Scottish" folk features appear to be filtered through a familiar Germanizing lens.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> In fact, the feature that Mendelssohn uses in his Scottish pieces that seems most explicitly exotic to German tradition, the augmented second, is not vaguely a Scottish

Furthermore, when he published the works, Mendelssohn covered up the Scottish inspirations mentioned in his diaries and letters. Except for the overture – which retained its Scottish title since it belonged to an inherently more programmatic genre – the Scottish works appeared in print without references to Scotland (the symphony's moniker is posthumous).<sup>78</sup> Mendelssohn gave the symphony and fantasy only German "absolute" titles. The direct association of German qualities with universal values is better known in Wagner's work – as it is in Marx's and to some extent Schumann's – yet we can see the same values internalized in Mendelssohn's assumptions here. Though his connections to German nationalism are much more complex, Mendelssohn's path to universalizing his impressions of *Scottish* music was through what he had learned in the study of *German* chorales, German *Männerchor* singing, and the like. Whatever the local and exotic personal inspirations for his Scottish music, when he translated these into public compositions, he clung to the aesthetic rules he held dear, so he reinterpreted Scotland as proto-German, and hence universal.

Indeed, he succeeded in obscuring the local content in the symphony to a large extent. The reviewer from the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* was able to pick out a strong thread of "folk" character running through the Scottish Symphony, as were several other early reviewers of the piece<sup>79</sup> – but none mentioned a particularly Scottish feeling. Robert Schumann's own review noted that "it has often been said that a special folk tone breathes from this symphony." Tellingly, though, Schumann had become confused and thought the piece he was reviewing was the Italian Symphony.<sup>80</sup>

Schumann's mistaken belief is all-important, for in some measure his praise was *dependent* on the fact that the local situation of the piece was less important than a universal abstracted folk tone. From his reactions to Gade's music, it is clear that Schumann thought of "national" music in terms similar to Wagner's. In fact, for Schumann the term "folk song" often carried these connotations as well, if less consistently than "national music." Despite the almost obligatory praise he accorded folk

feature, but must have been linked in the composer's mind to a general "primitive" scale-type as well.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas Schmidt-Beste is skeptical of the symphony's link to Scottish programs and imagery in the first place (see "Just How 'Scottish' is the 'Scottish' Symphony? Thoughts on the Form and Poetic Content in Mendelssohn's Opus 36," in *The Mendelssohns: Their Music in History*, ed. John Michael Cooper and Julie D. Prandi [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 147–65.) It does, however, seem clear to me from his letters and diaries that Mendelssohn was personally engaging with an idea of Scotland, even if the result is delocalized in many ways.

<sup>79</sup> See Wulf Konold, *Die Symphonien Mendelssohn Bartholdys* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1992), 229–30; Schmidt-Beste, "How 'Scottish,'" 149–51, 161–3.

<sup>80</sup> Schumann's review appeared in the *NZM* 18 (1843), 155–6. The translation I have cited is from Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, 204–5.

songs in his maxims for young musicians, he stressed the local and distinctive there too: "Listen attentively to all folk songs. These are mines of the most beautiful melodies and will teach you the characteristics of the different nations."<sup>81</sup> In other words, folk music from any country was of universal educational *interest* for composers, but sonically embodied localized, *sonderlich*, qualities. Even when Schumann dealt with German folk song, or treated northern/Scottish music as "proto-German," folk music seems to have suggested a limited (transitional, educational) milieu. His piano *Album für die Jugend* (which Schumann developed in tandem with his maxims for young musicians)<sup>82</sup> contains among other similar titles a "Nordisches Lied" (No. 41), marked "im Volkston" and another piece called "Volksliedchen" (No. 9). (In a sketch, Schumann also planned to include a "Schottisches Lied.") Yet these are didactic pieces: Schumann was driven to writing the *Album*, according to Clara, by the poor quality of the material children usually learned in their lessons.<sup>83</sup> The collection was originally also to include simple arrangements of pieces by Bach, Handel, Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, and Mendelssohn in order to introduce children to "the masters" in chronological order<sup>84</sup> – and while this did not come to pass, even in its final form the album's goal was to impart important musical principles to children, building as it went along. As exemplified in his belief that Gade, like other artists, should "acquire originality and then . . . reject it," Schumann seems to have treated national and folk music in general as an educational stage in a musician's development – the ultimate goal of that development was to assimilate and synthesize all local influences into a "higher" musical sensibility.

Since Schumann himself considered any national music (including the broadly "northern") to be more local than "universal," his own larger forays into "northern" style take an approach subtly different from Beethoven's or Mendelssohn's. Folk music always suggested the past (inherently, as tradition, as shared history); and the general trend, despite different approaches and techniques, was for composers to use this pastness itself as a universalizing basis, as a shared origin. Both Mendelssohn and Beethoven – whatever their differences – assumed the pastness of their folk material was in and of itself universal. On the other hand, when John Daverio suggests in his study of "Schumann's

<sup>81</sup> Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, 35.

<sup>82</sup> The sketches are coeval and the final maxims were prefixed to the *Album* itself beginning with the second edition. See Bernhard R. Appel (trans. John Michael Cooper), "'Actually, Taken Directly from Family Life': Robert Schumann's *Album für die Jugend*," in *Schumann and his World*, ed. R. Larry Todd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 173–7, 183–4.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 171. <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 175–6.



Ossianic Manner" that the "Nordic tone" in general is "an agency of pastness in music,"<sup>85</sup> the implications strike me as a narrower phenomenon. Daverio sees Schumann's full-fledged "Ossianic Manner" coming into being with the choral-orchestral ballades (Opp. 116, 139, 140, and 143) of the early 1850s, and implies that Schumann may have used a bardic manner to address political issues during the troubled time around 1848 and afterward – from the point of view of a narrator who, like the bard, is an individual embodying collective memory and sentiment.<sup>86</sup> While, for Daverio, Schumann's "transcendence" in these works comes from his epic manner, enshrining storytelling as collective experience,<sup>87</sup> Daverio's own reading implicitly suggests another way in which Schumann sought the universal in the bardic tone. Namely, since these works contained in their texts material that might obviously (perhaps even too obviously) relate to current (and geographically local) political situations, and since in some aspects of his settings, Schumann strove to emphasize these elements, he may also have used the "pastness" of the northern or Ossianic mode here to obscure the specificity of the present – to retreat from any open topicality in the words. There is some irony in this: the very same national "originality" that for Schumann could potentially be *limiting* (for example in Gade: to the local, the exotic, the past) is here used to *open up* more "universal" meanings for a piece – by balancing against other content that might itself be seen as mirroring a work in local, present conditions. Viewed in these terms, Schumann's use of the Ossianic/northern nexus – as *sonderlich* but as a path to metaphorical abstraction – is idiosyncratic.

Schumann ultimately puts national music toward the same universalizing end as had Beethoven and Mendelssohn, but the techniques of the three composers differed when they engaged with the implications of national music as wholly or partly local. To give the local elements a broader validity, Beethoven treated the local *as* the universal, and Schumann treated each locality as a balancing factor to universalize other localities. Mendelssohn, meanwhile, chose to bypass the local level for the most part: even when in contact with a potentially exotic locality, he chose primarily to treat folk music in terms he could relate immediately to the unmarked (German) style he considered automatically international.

From the 1820s until the middle of the century, the term "national music" had undergone changes in both its German and English forms – and this shift was paralleled in many other European languages as well.

<sup>85</sup> Daverio, "Schumann's Ossianic Manner," 259.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 260–73. Mercer-Taylor invokes the idea of collective memory as well, in the case of Mendelssohn's Scottish Symphony (see "The Music of German Memory").

<sup>87</sup> Daverio, "Schumann's Ossianic Manner," 271–3.



While it is only in Wagner's prose that we see the German words "Volk" (as universal, German) and national (as *sonderlich*, local, dead) growing clearly apart, the implications were already clear in Mendelssohn's and Schumann's work: the most local implications of folk song had to be subverted or balanced somehow in order for the resulting music to be great art in German terms. Meanwhile, although "national music" largely kept its positive connotations in English (because, as in all musically "peripheral" cultures, in Britain it was a ticket to a culturally replenishing "school" of art music), even here, the local was meant as a bridge into universal art. By mid-century, "national" had become a word showing both the universalizing aspirations and the restrictive local legacies of the discourses on folk and art music.

DropBooks

# 8

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## Folk and art musics in the modern Western world

This [final chapter](#) will gather various strands, suggesting how the folk and art music categories hardened in their present forms and perpetuated themselves into today's world – and how they affect our thoughts both about earlier periods of music history and about current music-making.

### **A final ripple: folk music and art music encounter popular music**

Perhaps the last major readjustment to the concepts of folk and art music happened as these came to sit alongside a third category, “popular music.” This music was “popular” no longer in the old sense of culture shared across classes; rather, as the Industrial Revolution changed Europe forever, its definition came to be based on a new set of criteria revolving around the taint of the commercial, of politics, and of class. Alongside the relationships in [Figure 6.1](#) (p. 204), a new schema emerged around the middle of the nineteenth century (see [Figure 8.1](#)). The modern paradigm into which we fit “folk” music and “art” music is a combination of the two frameworks ([Figures 6.1 and 8.1](#)).

Certain anti-commercial values date back to the later eighteenth century – when the supporters of both “national music” and musical “classics” set themselves up against “fashionable” music – but the fashionable music they railed against did not yet have the characteristics of “popular” music as we know it (i.e. as in [Figure 8.1](#): associated with crafty manipulation for a mass audience). For many devotees of “national music” in Britain after Beattie, or of *Volkslied* in Germany at the end of the century, the very appeal of this “natural” music was that it allowed its supporters to dismiss modern commercial fashion not as “low” manipulation but rather as professional-elitist artifice and *aristocratic* frippery, separate from the true genius of the people or

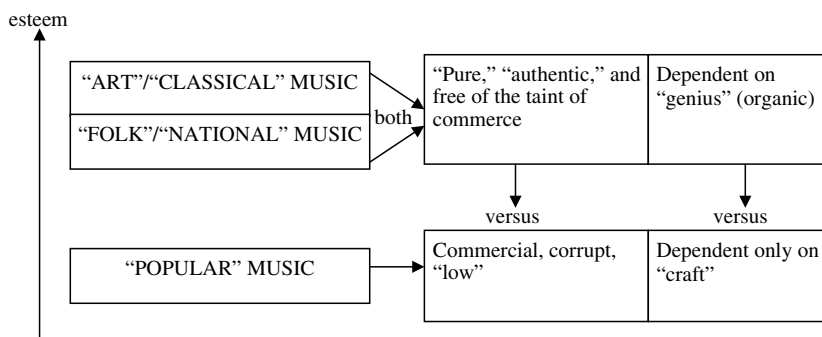


Figure 8.1

populace. Among these arbiters, the term “popular” was by no means a dirty word; on the contrary, the folk or folk-like music they advocated would naturally be “popular” because it was simple, touching and universal. The Lied as genre emerged largely from this aesthetic,<sup>1</sup> and other genres were touched by it as well. In short, simplicity, and its attendant popularity, were framed as *aesthetic goals* within the fine arts in the eighteenth century. As Franz Friedrich von Böcklin would write in his *Fragmente zur höheren Musik*: “what can’t be understood by a child probably doesn’t deserve to be understood.”<sup>2</sup> Böcklin’s was of course the extreme formulation, but the trend was powerful even among moderates. For composers such as Mozart, as we know well, tailoring a piece so that it would reach the largest and most varied audience was a sign of good composition, not of selling out.

The late eighteenth-century cult of “classics” in Britain was already a bit less democratic than the cult of “national music”; but a *real* shift away from an aesthetic principle that strove for “popularity” came with the idea of synthetic art music in the German discourse. Although such “art music” necessarily absorbed and built upon a broad folk collective, its connections to folk purity were reconceived as part of an individual’s “sentimental” creative consciousness – and hence abstracted from the idea of accessibility to a mass audience. This separation of an idealized folk from the populace is adumbrated already in the same seminal Introduction in which Herder speaks of folk song as “material” for art, for he also notes here that his beloved “folk” (*Volk*) – representing the universal spirit of a nation – were certainly not the “rabble” (*Pöbel*), who only shrieked destructively.<sup>3</sup> As the organic, synthetic conception

<sup>1</sup> See for example Heinrich Schwab, *Sangbarkeit, Popularität und Kunstlied: Studien zu Lied und Liedästhetik der mittleren Goethezeit, 1770–1814* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1965).

<sup>2</sup> Cited *ibid.*, 128.

<sup>3</sup> “Volk heißt nicht, der Pöbel auf den Gassen, der singt und dichtet niemals, sondern schreyt und verstümmelt” (*Werke*, 25: 323). Herder also distinguishes *Volkslied* from *Gassenton*, with analogous inferences.

of art spread, it was increasingly associated with individual mental complexity rather than simplicity. "Simplicity" in professionally composed music was consequently reconceived as a condescending gesture to win a mass audience, and the idea of popularity became linked to dirty commercialism as such. By A. B. Marx's generation, it was a given that great composers – individual geniuses – were those who demanded that their audiences meet them on *their* terms. (The audiences must *heranreifen* to great music, as Marx had put it in his review of the Beethoven settings.)

Still, even this conception of art, formulated by the new class of bourgeois intellectuals in Germany, did not set itself chiefly against a lower-class mass audience. One of the interesting things that emerges from William Weber's work on musical life through the early nineteenth century is that much of the music that these intellectuals and composers came to dismiss as crass and commercial was still supported primarily by an upper-middle-class and even partially aristocratic audience; it was the world of virtuosi, benefit concerts, and salons.<sup>4</sup> The philistines against whom Schumann marched his *Davidsbündler* were not the "mass" popular music audiences of later in the century, but the opulent supporters of the fashionable virtuosi.<sup>5</sup> After all, Germany was one of the last European nations to be industrialized: in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there *was* no urban working class there.

Today's category of "popular" music depended on the idea of undereducated masses ready to be manipulated by cynical capitalists; and this idea – crystallized of course in Marxist thought – itself depended on the emergence of a large urban working class interacting in modern terms with market capitalism. It was in Britain that a real urban working class would emerge during the first half of the nineteenth century. Thus, comparisons in British writings between the "real folk" and the "corrupt" rabble – while outwardly similar to Herder's – pick up a new resonance. In Herder's formulation, the folk might already have been an idealized conception rather than a real group he wanted to confront, but in his feudal nation there had been nothing concrete

<sup>4</sup> Weber calls this fashionable and virtuosic domain "high-status popular music," a label that works for consistency within his own study, but he is aware that the term "popular" would change meaning at mid-century. See Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1975), esp. 11, 19–20, 30–52, 59; also Weber, *Rise of Musical Classics*, 19, 84–8, 199–200, 206–13, etc.

<sup>5</sup> In another example of the same trend, the French composer Gossec had argued in the 1790s that the new rich were too ignorant to be patrons, and that the French revolutionary government ought to take on this responsibility. See Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 55–7.

to differentiate between the shrieking *Pöbel* and the noble *Volks* except his personal taste in poetry; so the more detailed commercial connotations of popular music and its apparently manipulative use of craft were absent. On the other hand, when William Motherwell wrote to Peter Buchan in 1826 about changes to the Scottish countryside ("every three miles of it either having some large town or public work or manufactory within its bounds which absorbs the rustic population and attracts strangers – corrupts ancient manners – and introduces habits of thinking and of living altogether hostile to the preservation and cultivation of traditionary song"<sup>6</sup>) he had in mind a specific new urban social group which he singled out as a threat to folk music.

If we take account of these social upheavals, perhaps one of the earliest meaningful differentiations between folk and popular music is that which appears around the same time in the lectures of the English composer William Crotch. Published in 1831, Crotch's lectures note that he was "tempted to apply to [music] what Sir Joshua Reynolds says of public exhibitions of paintings, – 'Popularity always accompanies the lower styles.'"<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Crotch believed that "national music" (which he specifically defined as "that which has been traditionally preserved in various nations, the authors being generally unknown"<sup>8</sup>) was instructive for artists to study – thereby revealing that for him, art and folk were already defined not only against each other as in Figure 6.1, but also grouped together as in Figure 8.1 and set apart from the "popular." Ultimately, Richard Middleton seems right on the mark both when he isolates Herder's comment dividing the "folk" from the "rabble" as "the beginnings of the modern 'problem' of popular music," and when he recognizes that such a distinction took on concrete terms of class and commerce, and became widespread, only as the nineteenth century progressed.<sup>9</sup> Even at mid-century it remained most of all an English phenomenon, since England in 1850 was still incomparably more industrialized than the rest of Europe.<sup>10</sup> At that time, the urban working class and lower middle class there first gained possession of their own recognized category of commercial music – via such emerging institutions as the music hall.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, this category too could now be defined by origins. Disdain toward mass culture

<sup>6</sup> Letter cited in Ailie Munro, *The Democratic Muse: Folk Music Revival in Scotland* (Aberdeen: Scottish Cultural Press, 1996), 3. Such sentiments were becoming common in collections of Scottish song at this time: Motherwell himself would voice similar sentiments in his collection of *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern* the next year.

<sup>7</sup> Crotch, *Lectures on Music*, 20. <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>9</sup> See Middleton, "Popular Music," *New Grove*, rev. edn, 20: 133, 133–4.

<sup>10</sup> For a chart showing relative urbanization and industrialization of Europe in 1850, see Hobsbawm, *Age of Revolution*, 318–19.

<sup>11</sup> The French café concerts were a similar development on the Continent, however. On these see Attali, *Noise*, 72–7.

had some precedent in the fear among members of the aristocracy regarding the power of song as a political tool among lower-class mobs (especially in the run-up to the French Revolution);<sup>12</sup> but then (once again) it had been a case more of how music was *used* than where it came from. Now there would be a real “culture industry” – in which popular music was traced to a particular kind of creative source.

It is not possible here to follow up the later history of this third category, popular music, which has in any case been well studied;<sup>13</sup> but we can note that its conceptualization in the nineteenth century represents one of the final elements to be added to the folk–art relationship as we know it today. “Folk music” and “art music” had become the unequal but symbiotic realms of organic genius, and both were now separated from the commercial world of “popular music.” This completed a century-long transformation of musical categorization.

### **Our current terminology**

To deal with these solidifying categories, musicians, critics and historians in the mid-nineteenth century also needed a more consistent terminology. Since the 1760s, the words “popular,” “national,” and “traditional” had been used interchangeably and inconsistently in Anglophone writing to designate what we now call folk music. Two of these words had ceased to be satisfactory synonyms by the 1850s. As Chapter 7 shows, the designation “national music” had widened into a meaning that included much art music, and furthermore, for enemies of these national “schools,” the word had also picked up the negative, limiting connotations of local color. As a result, “national music” was less and less an appropriate name to sum up the conception of folk music. (Among the earliest sources to problematize the direct translation of *Volkslied* as “national song” is an English version from the 1850s of A. B. Marx’s educational textbook, where the translator admits that he has only retained the term “national song” in Marx’s section on

<sup>12</sup> See Mason, *Singing the French Revolution*, 15–33, 215.

<sup>13</sup> For coverage of the emergence of this “low” category in the middle of the nineteenth century, see Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840–1914: A Social History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); Peter Bailey, ed., *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986); Ronald Pearsall, *Victorian Popular Music* (Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1973); Weber, *Music and the Middle Class*; Sponheuer, *Musik als Kunst und Nicht-Kunst*; Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Peter Van der Merwe, *Origins of the Popular Style: The Antecedents of Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). For a brief historical summary, see Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1990), esp. 11–16; and Middleton’s *New Grove* article “Popular Music.”

setting *Volkslied* because he “could not find a better one.”<sup>14</sup> In the 1856 “publisher’s Advertisement” to the volume, the term “people’s song” is used, with the German original *Volkslied* actually included in parentheses.) Similarly, as urban, commercial music was becoming a booming industry – and beginning to represent its own new category – the word “popular” was picking up enough modern baggage in Britain that it too was becoming problematic as a synonym for the higher-status category we know as folk music. Although “popular” lingered through the rest of the nineteenth century as an occasional synonym for this music,<sup>15</sup> its use in this sense declined steadily, basically disappearing by 1900.<sup>16</sup> “Traditional music” could have replaced the labels national music and popular music as they were becoming problematic, but, for some reason, the adjective “traditional” did not transfer (yet) to a common noun phrase (i.e. “traditional music”). Although “traditional music” later worked itself back in as a synonym, in the middle of the nineteenth century, a new term seemed necessary. That new term was “folk.” William Thoms coined the term “folklore” in English in 1848, claiming it worked better than “popular antiquities”; and within the next decades the term was gradually applied to music in the combinations “folk song” and “folk music.”<sup>17</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century, our modern three-prong terminology of folk, art, and popular music was in place. When C. Hubert H. Parry made his inaugural address to the “Folk-Song Society” in 1899, he could call “folk-music” one of the “purest products of the human mind,” while “common popular songs” were the “enemy at the doors of folk-music.”<sup>18</sup> Other languages, too, added their own new twists to existing terminology to help delineate the modern categories. The

<sup>14</sup> A. B. Marx, *Theory and Practice of Musical Composition*, trans. Herrman S. Saroni (New York: Mason Brothers, 1856; the first edition of this translation apparently dated from around 1851), 1: 358.

<sup>15</sup> The most famous lingering uses of the word popular in this sense (i.e. as “folk”) were in William Chappell’s *Popular Music of the Olden Time ... Illustrative of the National Music of England* (London: Cramer, Beale and Chappell, [1859]) and in Francis James Child’s famous collection of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882–98).

<sup>16</sup> See Derek Scott, “Music and Social Class,” in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 545.

<sup>17</sup> G. F. Gomme noted in *The Folk-Lore Journal* in 1885 that “folk-song” was in common usage (“The Science of Folk-Lore,” 6); the *OED* also notes “Folk-song” in an 1870 book title. The compound “folk music” may have taken another ten years or so.

<sup>18</sup> *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 1 (1899–1904), 1–2; See also Pearsall, *Victorian Popular Music*, 30, 36–7, and 47 on Hubert Parry’s condemnation of the music hall and “popular music” in general. In the later nineteenth century, William Weber notes also that the two camps within elite-supported music – the virtuosic (previously stigmatized as “fashionable,” etc.) and the contemplative – were becoming more unified around the “New German School,” thus creating a united front against such new forms as the music hall, which eventually became associated by the Victorians with decadence and vice. See Weber, *Music and the Middle Class*, 51, 60–6.



German term “Unterhaltungsmusik,” for example, solidified into a more negative downside to art music, basically acting as the German equivalent of popular music – and (despite its apparent etymology) subsuming questions of function into newer examinations of each work’s holistic individuality and origins as well.<sup>19</sup>

### **Implications for viewing the eighteenth century and before**

Given the historical formation of our folk and art categories over the specific period detailed in this book, I would like to consider some further implications for looking at music from various eras. This is by no means an exhaustive consideration of the power exercised by the concepts folk and art music over our own thinking and over that of historical actors, but rather a glance at some of the ways scholarship might be affected by the history we have traced.

First, it should be clear that in addressing music from before the final years of the eighteenth century, modern attempts to apply the origin-based categories “art music” and “folk music” – and especially the suggestion that these concepts entered into the minds of musicians – are anachronistic. If we do want to get closer to musical thought in the eighteenth century, we ought to abandon these origin-based terms and cling more to the question of function that was so important at the time.<sup>20</sup> Often a manuscript collection of music or a homebound volume of published music from this period, for example, seems like a strange hodge-podge of melodic types if we are thinking about musical origins – but makes sense entirely if we realize that the tunes are all adapted and arranged for a single purpose (leading a dance band, playing at home on the piano, etc.), and that melodic origins were not important in determining the contents of the collection. In many circles, such function-based thinking about music would continue even well into the nineteenth century: for example, young amateur pianists in the early

<sup>19</sup> See the new MGG s.v. “Unterhaltungsmusik” (esp. Sachteil 9: 1188–9); and Sponheuer, *Musik als Kunst und Nicht-Kunst*, ch. 4.

<sup>20</sup> An assumption that folk music and art music are objective and lasting categories present since the Middle Ages has continued from David Johnson’s seminal *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland* to some of the more recent important works on Scottish music, such as John Purser’s *Scotland’s Music: A History of Traditional and Classical Music of Scotland from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1992). In his subtitle and elsewhere, Purser does not consider questions about the origins or effect of this labeling. Similarly, Ailie Munro acknowledges that both “folk” and “traditional” are problematic terms, but still ends up treating “folk music” as a category that can be clearly opposed to “art music” in an objective sense, whether in the eighteenth century or now. See *The Democratic Muse: Folk Music Revival in Scotland*, 1–7, 15, 20, etc. (This book is a revision of Munro’s earlier *The Folk Music Revival in Scotland*.)

1800s would continue to bind their variations on a Mozart aria together with their piano settings of “national melodies.”<sup>21</sup>

Even as origins began to be important in categorizing music, at first the attention was almost entirely to national provenance, without the later distinction between individual (artistic) and collective or anonymous (folk) origins. The English soldier Edmund Burt, working in Scotland in the 1720s, described a typical carillon recital in a Scottish city as follows:

their Musick Bells (as they call them) are very entertaining, and a Disgrace to our Clock-Work Chimes. They are Plaid at the Hours of Exchange, that is, from Eleven to Twelve; upon Keys like and Organ or Harpsicord [*sic*], only as the Force, in this Case, must be greater than upon those Instruments, the Musician has a small Cushion to each Hand to save them from bruising. He plays *Scots*, *English*, *Irish* and *Italian* [*italics original*] Tunes to great Perfection, and is heard all over the City. This he performs every Week-Day, and, I am told, he receives from the Town, for this Service, a Salary of Fifty Pounds a Year.<sup>22</sup>

The Italian tunes must have been recent operatic melodies, and most of the Scottish and Irish tunes we would probably now classify as folk or traditional based on their origins; but there is no indication that, when transformed for a particular function (public Carillon music), Burt or anyone else held these domains apart as different “kinds” of music; he mentions only the newly important criterion of *national* origin.

Similarly, composers themselves were able to mix different national styles – as well as “high” and “low” styles in the old sense (where high and low concern the emotions or characters portrayed in these styles) – without any conscious thought about folk or art music. Bach could write a “high” sarabande and a “lower” allemande; James Oswald could write a Scottish reel and follow it in a suite with an Italian *siciliana*. Both composers were drawing on a palette of music with associated functional and characteristic dance moves, not consciously straddling the line that would later be drawn between folk and art music. Even in the later part of the century, most composers who incorporated pre-existing popular melodies into their music did not see their melodic material as “folk nature” – it was rather “popular” in the oldest sense: shared common material. Nor did they see their work on that material

<sup>21</sup> One compendium in my possession is bound in leather, with the name “Miss Syme” embossed in gold on the cover. It contains arrangements of many Scottish songs as piano variations or rondos, one of Niel Gow’s Strathspey collections (*Complete Repository*, part 1 of 1799) alongside Rossini (‘Di Tanti Palpiti’) and Mozart arias arranged as, or introduced into, variation sets and other keyboard divertimenti along similar lines.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Burt, *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to his Friend in London*, 2 vols. (London: Printed for S. Birt, 1754), 1: 240–1. These letters were written in the 1720s, but not published until 1754.

as organic art in the nineteenth-century sense. The harmonization of these melodies was not a special task: it required attention neither to the purity (and archaic features) of the source, nor to the act of setting as mediation between individual and collective creativity.<sup>23</sup> Composers such as J. C. Bach treated what we would now consider folk melodies in the same way they treated the many fashionable opera melodies they used for variations and rondos. (The origins of the airs played a role only insofar as they might begin to represent national cultural capital.)

Haydn seems to have lived his whole life without ever treating “the folk” as an idealized natural Other or dwelling on the new idea of synthetic, organic art music. Such rhetoric, indeed, seems foreign to Haydn’s creative world: the many “peasant” or “rustic” themes the composer used in his instrumental music seem part of his palette of topoi for portraying different musical gestures and affects, along the older lines of the high, middle, and low styles. Even his late oratorio *Die Jahreszeiten* seems (musically and in Gottfried van Swieten’s libretto) to “portray” peasants happily at their work, offering moral lessons to all – basically an old pastoral paradigm – rather than attempting to base an “art” composition on “folk” musical sources. (Thus to suggest, for example, as Rosen does, that “the interest in folk music had a long history already by the time it took on such significance for Haydn and Mozart”<sup>24</sup> is a double distortion, since not only was the very idea of folk music new at the time, but it also seems to have had little significance for Haydn and Mozart themselves.<sup>25</sup>)

On the other hand, we must be aware that for *some* musicians and critics in the last part of the eighteenth century the ideas of oral “tradition” and “national music,” as primitive Others, do enter on the scene. While these new ideas cannot be applied before this era, from this point we must consider their power. In Chapters 4 and 5, I considered

<sup>23</sup> For example, in the Preface to one of his compositions, the composer J. B. Cramer noted that “introducing popular airs, arranged as lessons for the practice of learners, greatly promotes their application and improvement; besides, when desired to play they have the satisfaction to observe that they afford more entertainment to their hearers, by pieces of this kind, than by playing long and uninteresting compositions” (cited in Nelson, “Scotland in London’s Musical Life,” 280).

<sup>24</sup> Rosen, *Classical Style*, 330.

<sup>25</sup> Arguably, Mozart’s portrayal of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* suggests aspects of the folk Other. Taruskin notes that Papageno’s “utterances seem close to the origins of speech and language, as if embodying Herder’s concept of the origin of human culture(s).” See Subotnik, *Deconstructive Variations* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4–6, 21–7. Ultimately the different possible ways of looking at Papageno’s character themselves suggest that he is a transitional and formative figure in the development of a “folk” archetype.

direct effects such as the formation of folk modality and the structuring of a folk “work-concept,” but an indirect effect is also important: the new juxtaposition of national and cultivated music already effected a distortion, or at the very least a new spin, on the way earlier music and musical thought was depicted by some writers from this period. John Hawkins projected his own tastes and categories onto the older figure of Purcell in his oft-quoted imagining of that composer playing for Queen Mary. (Hawkins suggests that Purcell would have been riled at the queen’s request to hear the “vulgar ballad” “Cold and Raw” after Purcell had been playing her his own music.<sup>26</sup>) Similarly, as we have seen, Herder quoted Addison and Montaigne as epigraphs on his 1778 *Volk-slieder* collection, and Joseph Ritson and John Pinkerton attacked Allan Ramsay for altering “tradition” in his collections of Scottish melodies from the 1720s. Purcell, Montaigne, Addison, and Ramsay themselves could not have thought in terms of folk music and art music at all – however their work might be reinterpreted by Hawkins, Herder, Ritson, and Pinkerton. To complicate matters, the latter group of writers did not think of folk music and art music quite in nineteenth- and twentieth-century terms either, so their terminology cannot to be conflated with our own any more than it can with that of the earlier writers.

Furthermore, because with these concepts – and contrary to the old chestnut – compositional practice often lagged behind historiographical theories, in the last part of the eighteenth century a gulf might open between the creative world of a composer and the world of critical reception in which that same composer’s works were being received. However limited Haydn’s own engagement was with the folk and art music categories (*pace* Rosen), his work might already at the end of his own life begin to be *received* as consciously engaging with folk music as such.<sup>27</sup> This trope of reception was magnified later, over the early part of the nineteenth century, of course. By 1836 A. B. Marx would write that Haydn was an artist whose “folklike thought . . . lifted him above the surface of unconscious instinct without alienating him from his secure, natural ground.”<sup>28</sup> To write history responsibly, we must take

<sup>26</sup> See Hawkins, *General History of Music*, 4: 6–7n.

<sup>27</sup> A good example is the 1803 *AmZ* article cited by Gramit, which claimed that both Haydn and Handel elevated “simple or simple-seeming” music, combining it “with their own wealth of ideas and according to the nature of our music” (*Cultivating Music*, 81, Gramit’s translation; emphasis in original German).

<sup>28</sup> Cited *Ibid.*, 87. Compare this to an earlier (1790–2) reaction to Haydn, cited on the same page by Gramit: “He possesses the great artistry to often appear familiar in his compositions. Thereby, despite all the contrapuntal artistry found in them, they are popular and pleasant to every amateur.” The difference between these examples strikes me far more than the similarity. We are again looking at the difference between an idea of the folk based on organic absorption and an older ideal of general “popular” accessibility with a universal message.

care to distinguish between the creative world of a composer and these (often later but sometimes overlapping) critical appraisals.

### **Implications for viewing the nineteenth century**

Studying the relationship of folk and art music in the nineteenth century brings the challenge that even as the concepts of folk music, art music, and popular music became axiomatic, the terminology was still catching up. This went considerably further than just the names of the categories themselves: it could extend to all sorts of language that tied them together.

Consider the German word “Volkston,” one of the most flexible and hence problematic terms that focused on the relationship of folk and art music. A catch-all for music that dealt with the “folk” in an aesthetic forum, at times it meant any music *portraying* the folk (for example as the “happy peasant,” a vestige of the old pastoral sense), at times it meant synthetic art music “absorbing” and aestheticizing the folk, and at times it meant “folk-like” music aimed at a folk or mass *audience*. While there has been a good deal of scholarly writing on the *Volkston*,<sup>29</sup> there has been little acknowledgement of its more general shift in meaning and esteem as the conceptual categories art, folk and popular music hardened. In the 1780s, individual writers freely mixed the three meanings above, whereas by the 1850s, although the word might still be applied to different approaches by different writers, there was less mixing: music that sought to synthesize and “absorb” an idealized collective folk had separated clearly from music with a more populist approach.

In its origins, the term “Volkston” is linked to the picturesque generation’s cult of the natural and to the early German Lied – when popularity still carried its older associations of aesthetic universality, and not the later, sullied connotations it picked up in contrast to “complex,” “sentimental” art. When J. A. P. Schulz coined and described his idea of *Lieder im Volkston*,<sup>30</sup> he was suggesting that composed music could fulfill a moral responsibility to cultivate and refine a populace from above by engaging with a popular style in an immediately

<sup>29</sup> Most recently in Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, ch. 3. See also Ernst Klusen, “Über den Volkston in der Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* 17 (1972), 35–48; Schwab, *Sangbarkeit, Popularität und Kunstlied*; J. W. Smeed, *German Song and its Poetry, 1740–1900* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), ch. 2 (“Im Volkston”); Mi-Young Kim, *Das Ideal der Einfachheit im Lied von der Berliner Liederschule bis zu Brahms* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1995); and Margaret Mahony Stoljar, *Poetry and Song in Late Eighteenth-Century Germany: A Study in the Musical “Sturm und Drang”* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), ch. 6.

<sup>30</sup> See J. A. P. Schulz, *Lieder im Volkston bey dem Clavier zu Singen*, 3 vols. (Berlin: George Jacob Decker [vol. 3, Heinrich August Kottmann], 1782–90).

accessible way.<sup>31</sup> Johann Friedrich Reichardt's writings and compositions from the same era<sup>32</sup> combined Schulz's aims with a more explicit articulation of the new desire to draw on (absorb) idealized folk-musical idioms in order to inspire higher, synthetic art – thus making the influence between art and folk bidirectional. As David Gramit points out, "This ambivalent attempt to identify with the *Volk* while also claiming professional competence as a form of distinction from the general public makes Reichardt's rhetorical task considerably more challenging than Schulz's."<sup>33</sup> Still, in Reichardt's generation, popularity itself does not contradict the aesthetic integrity of the resulting works; it could remain a legitimate goal of music that focused on synthesizing folk music into higher art.<sup>34</sup>

Time changed things: although the pursuit of universal popularity had helped establish the idea of the folk in the first place, the same process also caused the obsession with "pure" origins and the scorn for commodification that would be the undoing of that pursuit. For the generation of "serious" art musicians after Reichardt, catering to a large audience was no longer an acceptable use of the *Volkston*. Instead, folk elements were reinterpreted as organically grounding the increasingly alienated artist in the "universality" he sought, *without* requiring that musician to write directly for the marketplace. Though the term "Volkston" persisted, Reichardt's combination of the synthetic and populist approaches to the term could not be maintained after the clearer separation of the popular from the artistic (and folk) realms. When nineteenth-century composers attempted a conflation along Reichardt's lines, they were confined to an obscurity well below "serious" aesthetic discourse. Much later the same remained true: in a 1972 article on the meaning of *Volkston* in nineteenth-century music, Ernst Klusen draws a very sharp division between a "good" and "bad" *Volkston*: the former is the use of "folk music" by individual artists to inspire new directions in the unfolding of "autonomous, aesthetic" art, and the latter is the moral, pedagogical or overtly political uses of invented "folk song" to control the masses.<sup>35</sup> Gramit does an excellent job deconstructing Klusen's

<sup>31</sup> See Gramit's discussion of both the large cultural trends and the subtleties at play here: *Cultivating Music*, 65–73.

<sup>32</sup> See especially his essay "An junge Künstler," in *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin* 1 (1782).

<sup>33</sup> Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, 75.

<sup>34</sup> Gramit points out that Reichardt was already railing against an emergent commodification of music – that it might be only a "craft" or "trade" (*Cultivating Music*, 73–9). However, I would note the significance in the fact that Reichardt sees this problem affecting *all* music, "from the prince's *Oberkapellmeister* down to the beer fiddler" (cited *ibid.*, 75). It is precisely because popular music had not yet been cordoned off into a *separate* sphere in musical discourse that Reichardt can still seek maximum *popularity* for his own work through his appeal to a timeless "folk" sentiment.

<sup>35</sup> Klusen, "Über den Volkston," 37–9. He even relates the "bad" use of *Volkston* to the Nazi rise to power, etc. (*ibid.*, 48).



binary: for Gramit, the very ambiguity between the two approaches to the "folk" (as pure source and as receiving populace in need of cultivation) provided the power of the concept and term "folk" and hence of the idea of a *Volkston*.<sup>36</sup> Still, Gramit's suggestion that it is impossible to disentangle composers' desire to reach and "cultivate" a wide populace from their simultaneous desire to create great art rings true for Reichardt, but downplays the extent to which the discourse soon changed.<sup>37</sup> To understand the term "Volkston" in the nineteenth century, we must keep in mind that Klusen's binary was increasingly *perceived* as real already from the 1820s and certainly by the 1840s and 1850s. Wagner repeatedly stressed "The Folk as the Force conditioning the Art-work";<sup>38</sup> but it was out of the question that he would fashion his "artwork of the future" to please the widest "populace" – in fact he would deplore any work that was "reckoned in advance for presentation to the public."<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Wagner's vision of Beethoven composing the "Ode to Joy" "as the folk" (i.e. by organically embodying the collective) entirely eliminated the all-too-real questions of popularity (and audience in general) from aesthetic discussion of the artwork, locating its "collective" elements exclusively in an idealized realm within Beethoven's mind.

Thus, within "serious" musical circles, pieces that used the *Volkston* as a bid for popular reception or direct social instruction quickly came to be associated with the later connotations of "popular music": that is, with the dangerous and cynical mass-manipulation decried in the

<sup>36</sup> Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, 73–9.

<sup>37</sup> Notably, Gramit calls his chapter "The Dilemma of the Popular: The Volk, the Composer, and the Culture of Art Music," thus assuming that invoking the "folk" always involved connotations of the "popular." To a certain extent, Gramit acknowledges changes in the approach to the *Volkston* over time, noting at the end of the period he considers the growing prominence of composers who sought to "learn from the music of the people" over those whose goal was to "provide for them" (*ibid.*, 24; but see 113). Gramit attributes this change to the "developing security of musical culture" in the mid-nineteenth century. I think that the increasing desire to consider the "folk" entirely in an idealized realm was another reason: by the mid-nineteenth century, one could equate oneself to the folk without touching too much on the newly separated domain of the popular.

<sup>38</sup> This is one chapter heading from *The Artwork of the Future* (in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works* 1, trans. Ellis, 77). Wagner explicitly claimed that the link between the folk and the artist transcended both class and locality; it was rather a unity through shared desire: to the "folk" belong "[a]ll those who recognize their individual want as a collective want" (*ibid.*, 75). Therefore "our great redeemer and well-doer, Necessity's vicegerent in the flesh, – the Folk, will no longer be a severed and peculiar class; for in this Art-work we shall all be one" (*ibid.*, 77). The folk is for Wagner the unconscious and organic creator of all things good (language, state, religion, etc., *ibid.*, 80), so wise men never "should presume to teach the Folk, but ye should take your lessons from it" (*ibid.*, 80). The folk will help "the tyranny of fashion" to be "heaved away," so "holy, glorious Art" can "blossom in like fulness [*sic*] and perfection with Mother Nature" (*ibid.*, 82).

<sup>39</sup> In "Public and Popularity" [Publikum und Popularität], *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, 6: 55.



works of writers such as Klusen, and, of course, Adorno. (In German, this kitsch subcategory of popular music was often later referred to under the labels of “Volkstümlichkeit” and “Folklorismus.”<sup>40</sup>) Mostly, such music has been ignored by highbrow arbiters ever since the early nineteenth century. We tend to hear nothing at all of the various “Lieder im Volkston” written in the later nineteenth century, often for male chorus, by composers such as Hans Steiner, Rudolf Drumm, Carl Isenmann, and Eusebius Kaeslin. When scholarship *has* turned an eye toward the populist, socializing approach to the *Volkston*, the judgment has been almost universally negative from the nineteenth century onward. Reichardt himself, and others in his generation, have been censured in terms that would have been foreign to them – for supposedly misunderstanding Herder’s organic “songs of the folk” (*Lieder des Volkes*), and turning the concept into “songs for the folk” (*Lieder für das Volk*).<sup>41</sup> (The “tradition” camp has been just as hard on this body of material as the aestheticians: manufactured songs passed off as “folk music” have been rejected by folklorists as a form of “fakelore.”<sup>42</sup>)

When a “great composer” has strayed into this territory, or even seemed to do so, it has posed problems immediately. Consider late Schumann. From the end of the 1840s, he composed several piano pieces and cycles that seemed more concerned with educational *Volkstümlichkeit* than with artistic originality, and he also became eagerly involved in working with, and composing for, amateur choral groups (themselves often seen as a potent symbol of *Biedermeier* complacency with regard to “art”).<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, whatever Schumann’s approach shared with Reichardt’s and Schulz’s generation, there were fundamental differences, since Schumann was operating at time when popularity was no longer an aesthetic goal; and he was keenly conscious of this. Though Schumann remained aware of the marketplace,<sup>44</sup> in his house rules and maxims for young musicians, he wrote: “People say, ‘It

<sup>40</sup> See for example Hans Moser, “Vom Folklorismus in unserer Zeit,” *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 58 (1962), 177–209.

<sup>41</sup> See Kircher, “Volkslied und Volkspoesie in der Sturm- und Drangzeit,” 23, 35–42, 56. Kircher in 1903 criticized Herder’s followers such as G. A. Bürger for taking the “organic coming-into-being” (*organischer Entstehung* [40]) out of Herder’s concept of folk song and replacing it with a striving after general mass acceptance (popularity) instead. Schwab was similarly critical sixty years later, see *Sangbarkeit, Popularität*, 85–135, esp. 115, 133.

<sup>42</sup> On the concept of “fakelore,” coined by the folklorist Richard Dorson, see his *American Folklore and the Historian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), ch. 1 (pp. 3–14).

<sup>43</sup> See John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a “New Poetic Age”* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), esp. 395–415 (“Schumann and the Biedermeier Sensibility”).

<sup>44</sup> See Anthony Newcomb, “Schumann and the Marketplace: From Butterflies to *Hausmusik*,” in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), esp. 265–6, 268.

pleased’; or ‘It failed to please.’ As though there were nothing more important than the art of *pleasing* the public!” As we saw in the [previous chapter](#), Schumann seemed to use the *Volkston* not as a route to popularity, nor as an attempt at extramusical character formation (i.e. social control), nor as an end in itself, but ultimately to build *musicians* who could eventually appreciate the highest “art” music (which generally meant Beethoven symphonies).<sup>45</sup> If Schumann himself saw popularity in different terms from Schulz and Reichardt, the *reception* of his *Hausmusik* compositions has since the outset hinged even more on the extent to which they have been seen to have capitulated to, or even striven for, a “popular” element. When these pieces have been attacked, it is because the critic has believed they stray into the “bad” kind of *Volkston*, with its implications of commercial craft and manipulation.<sup>46</sup> When they have been defended, it has generally been by asserting that Schumann’s “art” transcended the pieces’ apparent simplicity. Already in 1849 a contemporary review noted that Schumann’s *Album für die Jugend* offered “poetry” even to a fledgling pianist;<sup>47</sup> and modern criticism has sought to redeem this and other late works in the same terms – by focusing on the synthetic agency of the composing genius.<sup>48</sup> Keeping Schumann separate from any implication of the directly socializing *Volkston* has been the case for the defense in dealing with these late works from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards.

So, we must remain aware of the increasing split between the “folk” and the “popular” as the nineteenth century progressed – even though the same language was sometimes applied to art music’s interaction with both realms. To take one other example, the dichotomy between music as “art” and “not-art” that Bernd Sponheuer traces in German musical thought from the early nineteenth century needs to be complicated. A simple art/not-art binary fails to note when “art” is set apart

<sup>45</sup> The distinction between writing “for the folk” to achieve popularity or instill docility and writing “for the folk” in order to prepare them for higher art is already present in Schiller’s statement, made in 1791, that the artist should only “descend from Olympus” to the folk in order to bring them up to his level, to challenge the masses rather than please or lecture to them (see citations and discussion in Schwab, *Sangbarkeit, Popularität*, 128–30). Schumann would certainly have agreed with Schiller’s formulations. As a British counterpart, George Thomson came to hope that the settings he commissioned from continental composers in his collections of “national music” would elevate the “taste of their pupils above commonplace stuff” (see the 1845 letter to George Hogarth, London, British Library, MS Add. 35269, ff. 118–119), though his demands for simplicity were often received by others as a bid for the wrong kind of popularity.

<sup>46</sup> Thus Wolfgang Boetticher savaged much of Schumann’s late work as “a frightful descent into [the composition of] homely commodities” (140); cited in Daverio, *Schumann*, 560, n. 13.

<sup>47</sup> Cited in Daverio, *Schumann*, 409.

<sup>48</sup> Daverio himself defended these pieces by insisting that Schumann’s apparent naïveté is “deceptive” – revealing of deeper ironies and feelings (*ibid.*, 400).

from *folk* music by the criteria in Figure 6.1 and when art is set apart from a more commercial sphere, as in Figure 8.1 – the latter being the thrust of most (but not all) of Sponheuer's study. While the schemas in the two Figures co-existed by the mid-nineteenth century, the emphasis is different in different situations – so that “not-art” is a field which includes everything from “proto-art” (folk) to “anti-art.”<sup>49</sup>

### **Implications for viewing the twentieth century, and for thinking about music in today's world**

The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth brought the first wave of so-called “folk revival” – in which the interest in folk music mushroomed directly alongside newly rigorous attempts at scientific cross-cultural comparisons. Despite the emergence of exhaustive structuralist and formalist approaches to folklore, the basic paradigm was maintained directly from the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup> The concepts of tradition and idiomatic authenticity continued to dictate what was accepted or rejected in folklore studies of the time, although each generation renegotiated what idioms were allowed as authentic. For example, piano arrangements of folk melodies were for a long time accepted in theory as well as practice by advocates of stringent “tradition,” largely of course because they were the only tool available to most people who wanted to reproduce this music in their homes. Indeed, widespread challenges to this form of arrangement as the primary way to disseminate “authentic” folk music came only with the spread of cheaper sound-reproduction after the Second

<sup>49</sup> On the opening page of his otherwise insightful study (*Musik als Kunst und Nicht-Kunst*), Sponheuer maps a dizzying whirl of binaries suggested by other writers onto the art/not-art dichotomy he is considering (avant-garde versus *volkstümlich*, trivial music versus art music, autonomous music versus functional, folk music versus art music, art versus kitsch, etc.) but clearly these focus on different relationships between art music and popular and folk musics, and do not all map onto each other; and Sponheuer often ignores these complications.

<sup>50</sup> Georgina Boyes sees a qualitative shift in the later nineteenth century, separating “folk revival” scholarship from earlier “Romantic” concepts of the folk, because of the development of evolutionism in the social sciences (*Imagined Village*, 7–9). However, as I argue here, a narrative of inevitable stages in society, cited as part of evolutionism by Boyes, and the resultant presence of cultural “survivals” from an early age, were not new ideas in the later nineteenth century; rather, they go back to the theories of conjectural history and discussions of “national music” in the eighteenth century, and hence to the “Romantic” (and “proto-Romantic”) concept of “folk” music. Since the distinction Boyes makes breaks down, I prefer to speak not of clearly separated Romantic and revival concepts of folk music, but instead of one long “discovery” of “folk music.” The “folk revival” beginning in the late nineteenth century is still an important process (well covered by Boyes), but rather than a reorientation of approach it was in essence a major concentration of effort (related to the growing institutionalization of the anthropological sciences, and the further fallout of industrialization).

World War – which allowed field recordings to “speak for themselves” to an educated public. In the folk clubs that began to spring up in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the piano was abandoned and sneered at, along with, at first, the guitar.<sup>51</sup> (Later, of course, the guitar was accepted in many acoustic “traditional” music groups.)

During this period, there were composers (such as Bartók) who were also collectors. They carried the exacting “scientific” criteria that they used to authenticate their ethnographic fieldwork into their aestheticizations of this material in their art-musical works – once again amplifying tendencies from the nineteenth century. Simultaneously, however, in other art-musical circles there was an apparent drift away from any direct invocation of the folk. This had much to do with the feeling that in industrialized “central” countries the folk no longer existed to draw on at all – they had become the “masses” associated with popular music. Adorno claimed in a famous 1932 essay that “There is no longer any ‘folk’ left whose songs and games could be taken up and sublimated by art”; now, because of “the opening up of the markets” and other socio-economic changes, “[t]he material used by vulgar music is the obsolete and degenerated material of art music.”<sup>52</sup> Again, this was surely a reason why modernists such as Schoenberg sought to draw on the German art tradition, which had supposedly already absorbed its collective “national” aspects back in the time of Bach, rather than seeking any direct connection to “the folk” in their own work.

The 1930s and 1940s brought some attempts to reconnect directly with a folk sound; but after World War II, the American and Western European avant-garde overall moved in a direction still further from direct folk-musical invocations. This must have been, as Richard Taruskin maintains, partly a reaction to the Cold War – a declaration of freedom by those watching the imposition of folkloric styles on composers east of the Iron Curtain.<sup>53</sup> In any case, this situation, combined with the rising and threatening presence of “popular” music genres such as rock, led to a new pan-national fraternity among “art music” practitioners, whose vision of an embattled cross-cultural domain of “free art” increasingly displaced the idea of national schools. Ideas akin to national schools of music did continue to play themselves out in some places, such as in South America. (And, in Scotland, even in 1970

<sup>51</sup> See Boyes, *Imagined Village*, 216–17, 223, 228.

<sup>52</sup> From Adorno, “Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik,” cited and translated in Max Paddison, *Adorno, Modernism, and Mass Culture: Essays on Critical Theory and Music* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1996), 83. Paddison does note that Adorno accepted that there were still some (peripheral) places where these changes had not penetrated, and thus he was able to praise the use of folk music elements by Janáček and Bartók (*ibid.*, 95).

<sup>53</sup> Taruskin, *New Grove*, rev. edn, “Nationalism,” Section 15.

the composer Ronald Stevenson was calling for a national school of music parallel to Bartók's – though most current Scottish composers do not think in these terms.<sup>54</sup>) Still, despite some exceptions, there is no doubt that from the 1950s to the 1970s, the folk and art music worlds in Western Europe and America appeared more separate than before.

If folk music and art music were riven so rigidly apart – losing the interdependent, symbiotic aspect that had been crucial to conceiving and supporting the concepts for so long – this might seem a logical prelude to their eventual dissipation as ideas. And indeed, in the last forty to fifty years postmodernism and post-structuralism have brought a serious challenge to the very notions of folk music and art music as categories. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Mark Twain, news of their death is greatly exaggerated. Let us conclude by considering the current state of affairs.

Young folklorists in the 1960s, such as Alan Dundes and Dan Ben-Amos, famously began to recognize the loaded history of the concepts "authenticity" and "tradition" and to attempt a redefinition of their discipline without recourse to these terms.<sup>55</sup> Others even suggested disposing of the very name "folklore," partly because the history of the word has been so bound up with very same ideas of tradition and authenticity.<sup>56</sup> Still others noted that with such upheavals, the discipline was threatening to think itself out of existence.<sup>57</sup> Dundes's solution, early on, was to reformulate the "folk" itself as "any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor."<sup>58</sup> Force of habit, however, has meant that almost no one has applied this idea to folk music. Indeed, folk music scholarship – despite some recent calls to get away from definitions based on idealized peasants, nationalist authenticity, and disappearing traditions<sup>59</sup> – has not remade itself as

<sup>54</sup> See Ronald Stevenson, "The Emergence of Scottish Music," in *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland*, ed. Karl Miller (London: Faber, 1970), 189–97. Stevenson wanted to free Scottish musicians from the "old bugbear of subservience to German hegemony" (*ibid.*, 192), but, at the same time, he had internalized the familiar German art-musical values: he criticized the late Victorian and Edwardian Scottish composers Hamish MacCunn and Blackwood McEwen for manifesting their Scottishness "only by giving their work a patina of local colour" (*ibid.*, 192), praised composers who could write both "naïve modern folk-songs and sophisticated, experimental art-songs" (*ibid.*, 194), and he hoped the field recordings in the School of Scottish Studies would create "new music in a distinctly Scottish idiom, as similar material did in the case of Bartók and Kodály" (*ibid.*, 196).

<sup>55</sup> See esp. Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context"; and Dundes, "The Devolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory"; see also Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity*.

<sup>56</sup> See the Introduction, n. 13; also see the entire issue of *Journal of American Folklore* 111/441 (1998).

<sup>57</sup> Thus consider the implications of Richard Dorson's "Editor's Comment: We All Need the Folk," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 15 (1978), 267–9, a response to Keil's "Who Needs the Folk?"

<sup>58</sup> Dundes, *Study of Folklore*, 2.

<sup>59</sup> There were isolated (if limited) earlier calls too; see for instance Charles Seeger, "Folk Music in the Schools of a Highly Industrialized Society," *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 5 (1953), 40–4. For an early attack on the idea that "folk music"

deeply as folkloristics in general. The fundamental link between the very idea of folk music and the origin-based conception of the traditional work is now two hundred years old; and since we are so accustomed to understanding music at least partly as “works,”<sup>60</sup> the body of music considered folk music has remained largely static.<sup>61</sup> (Perhaps the only major change is that the idea of urban folk music has been drawn under the umbrella.)

Furthermore, if we dismiss the idea of authenticity altogether, we run the risk of overlooking the power that the concept has had on the very sources we use to look at this material. The influence of the authenticity and tradition concepts is a tremendously important part of the history of “folk music”: what people have believed about this music is crucial to understanding its impact. Not only have folk music scholars operated on this premise, but “folk” musicians themselves have come under the sway of these concepts. Systemically, ideas that may have begun outside the performance community have been brought within – by this point, it is often “folk musicians” themselves who are most concerned with “tradition” (as we saw at the end of Chapter 4 with the increasingly internalized perpetuation of folk modality). So abandoning the idea of folk music may be as artificial now as accepting it was originally. Perception has formed its own reality.

A similar situation exists in the art-musical world. Once again, we see that ideas do not disappear completely once they have been important players for a long time. Just as we cannot unproblematically apply the idea of art music without distorting history before the end of the eighteenth century, we cannot ignore it (and its shaping of judgments and historiography) after the turn of the nineteenth century in some circles, and after the mid-nineteenth century anywhere. We have seen many examples of how the concept affected composers and scholars, and it continues to affect us strongly today. The extent to which the modern idea of art music is dependent on the Romantic model of synthesis and transcendence of a collective is evident from the fact that that model continues to provide the loftiest claims for the importance of such music in the modern world. Julian Johnson recently has defended art music against its critics on the grounds that it is inherently bound up

represented idealized “national” characteristics, see Ernest Newman, “The Folk-Song Fallacy,” *English Review* 11 (1912), 255–68.

<sup>60</sup> Philip Bohlman considers folk music as a “dialectical interrelation of text and context” at all times (*Study of Folk Music*, 104).

<sup>61</sup> When Boyes notes that our definition of “folk” has not changed for the last century, citing how we still consider a concert performance of a Britten setting of “The Foggy Dew” to be folk music on some level, but a “mother, sitting alone and lulling her child to sleep by singing ‘Brahms’s Lullaby’” to be outside the realm of folk music (*Imagined Village*, 16), she has pinpointed exactly the fact that musical categories “privilege source and item, rather than activity and context” (*ibid.*).



in the idea of transcendence: “the difference between art music and folk music” is that the former sublimates simple elements to “careful construction” and ultimately a “quality of newness” that results from “transcending boundaries.”<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, Peter Van der Merwe’s ambitious new study, *The Roots of the Classical: The Popular Origins of Western Music*, amounts to a massive fleshing-out of the familiar narrative: children’s chants (ch. 3) lead to a universal, natural pentatonic melodic skeleton of all melody (ch. 4), which is then picked up and formed into “organic” (for example 1, 14–17) and “complex” (for example 3, 124–6) classical perfection.<sup>63</sup> Other familiar tropes reappear too: Van der Merwe likes much of both “popular” and “folk” music (and wishes to blur some lines between them), but he presents classical musicians as real artistic agents who masterfully synthesize and sublimate the vernacular styles that influence them into individual works,<sup>64</sup> whereas throughout the book, popular and folk creations are presented as the unconscious results of other styles or of geographic happenstance. They are the collective roots of art music.<sup>65</sup> Individual creative minds are oddly ignored in these domains, where styles themselves are the protagonists. Additionally, although Van der Merwe comes down hard on early twentieth-century modernist composers who abandoned their vernacular roots and thus helped kill classical music’s appeal, the context for this condemnation is strongly to uphold the idea that a “classical” tradition is inherently meaningful and needed, and must be relinked to a collective foundation.<sup>66</sup> Treatment such as Van der Merwe’s – in which pieces by famous art-composers are framed in strikingly different terms from the examples drawn from popular and folk music – underscores the potential of the folk and art categories to prejudice our evaluations of musical value and meaning before we even approach individual specimens.

I have not written this book to create a landscape of complete relativism in which we cannot judge music at all, nor to pretend that there is nothing meaningful captured in the ideas of folk music and art music. I recognize that there will be some differences between orally transmitted musics and literate musics (though recent studies on many different kinds of music have repeatedly pointed out that this separation itself is fuzzy and cannot be overplayed). I also believe that there are musical

<sup>62</sup> Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 108, 110.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Van der Merwe, *Roots of the Classical: The Popular Origins of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>64</sup> See especially the sub-chapter on Wagner (pp. 362–75), but also for example 405–10, etc.

<sup>65</sup> Thus Van der Merwe discusses “drones, parallel chords, and pentatonic passages” and other folk elements as “vigorous native growth” used by Eastern European modernist composers, etc. (*Roots of the Classical*, 421).

<sup>66</sup> See *ibid.*, “Epilogue,” 464–9.



minds who have created musical worlds with an ability to stimulate us in ways that would have been difficult to achieve without years of immersion – a type of immersion generally unavailable to amateur or part-time musicians, and ignored in many attempts to make money or manipulate audiences through music. On the other hand, our judgments about what makes music “great” have tended too easily to align themselves with the rigidly defined categories from the nineteenth century. Non-literate spheres (let alone “peripheral” literate spheres) produce great individual musical minds too, and we must avoid the urge to relegate these individuals and their music into facile representatives of a collective group and ignore their own personal humanity. Similarly, commercial manipulation may create empty and dangerous works, but as scholars of popular music have long argued, some recent music originally produced toward commercial ends turns out to be “transcendent” too. And anyway, is that the goal all music should seek? On the other side of the coin, surely there is music even by the most famous classical “geniuses” that is no better than, nor inherently different from, music we habitually ignore or look down on. Students often come into music classes assuming that all pieces by Beethoven are inherently great – because of his supposedly “organic” and “universal” *modus operandi* – and waiting only to be shown *how* each work is a masterpiece. Finally, some recent studies have noted how the folk and art categories, of European origin, have influenced practice and discourse in non-Western musics, either by imposing Western art music as an external hegemonic practice in different countries, or by making the distinctions between indigenous “high” and “low” styles more rigid and predetermined.<sup>67</sup>

None of these criticisms of the established canon is new, of course – some are even trite by now; yet we should pause to recognize the extent to which our facile ways of approaching musical categories themselves limit our judgments of music – its sounds, effects, and meanings – within our complicated global and multicultural world today. To some degree this recognition is occurring: many Romantic and modernist dogmas have been or are being replaced with a sense of flexibility and play that at times seems to erase the boundaries of art itself.<sup>68</sup> Alongside the deconstruction of German hegemony in many musicological

<sup>67</sup> See for example Matthew Harp Allen, “Tales Tunes Tell: Deepening the Dialogue between ‘Classical’ and ‘Non-Classical’ in the Music of India,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 30 (1998), 22–52.

<sup>68</sup> Continuing to take a social approach to all music and to musical categorization in particular may eventually erode the origin-based labels by transferring the emphasis away from them and by raising historical awareness. Kay Kaufman Shelemay’s recent study of the Boston “early music” scene does show, on the part of certain participants, an awareness that labels such as “popular” and “classical” drew apart after the music they play was written; and this has led some of them to be more generally open to experimenting or breaking down generic barriers (see “Toward an Ethnomusicology

studies, the claims of composers have become more modest as well. It is possible that this is partly the result of the “failure” of art music in recent years to maintain its uniquely central position. As Kerman’s and Tomlinson’s widely used *Listen* textbook (cited in the Introduction) suggests, in the last fifty years we seem to have classical music persisting as an idea but without “classics” stemming from that period.<sup>69</sup> In fact, most Americans and Europeans consider the “classics” from this era to be the Beatles and other “classic rock,” a fact that has necessitated a rethinking of the boundary between art and popular music – making it more flexible than before. Still, the ideas of “folk,” “art” (and now “popular”) music remain guiding principles in arts funding, the academy, and the music industry – as well as among musicians participating in any of the three domains. The *New Grove* articles on countries in Europe and the Americas are still broken apart firmly into two sections, one on “art music” and one on “traditional music” (and in some cases a third section on “popular music”) – whether or not such distinctions can be maintained in reality for all the periods discussed, and whether or not this means that some musical minds placed in the “traditional” category are stripped of their human agency or the esteem they might deserve. The categories are still defined by exclusion, contact, and integration – and they continue to determine how musical sound fits into cultural hierarchies based on origins.<sup>70</sup> Just how musicians and audiences will reshape or replace the categories of folk and art music in the future remains to be seen, but certainly the concepts are still affecting us powerfully today.

of the Early Music Movement: Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds,” *Ethnomusicology* 45 [2001], 19).

<sup>69</sup> See *Listen*, 5th edn, 371.

<sup>70</sup> For example, jazz’s rise to the highest social respectability has been partly based on its shifting alignment with the different categories: first, mainstream cultural arbiters stopped denigrating jazz as dangerous, popular, commercial craft (Adorno’s vision) and rebranded it as an indigenous and “pure” Americanism (i.e. a form of folk music); and then, in the postwar decades, contemporary jazz further remade its own image as a kind of art music – forming its own avant-garde and canon. (Charles Mingus’s term was “Black classical music.”)

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